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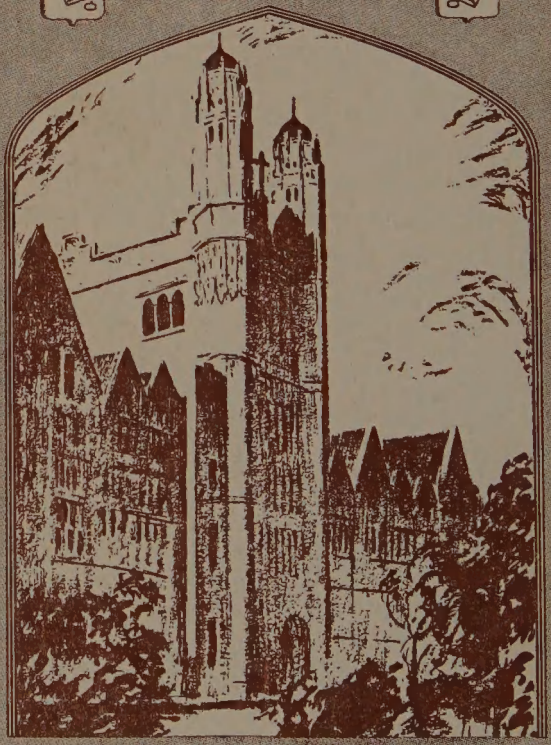

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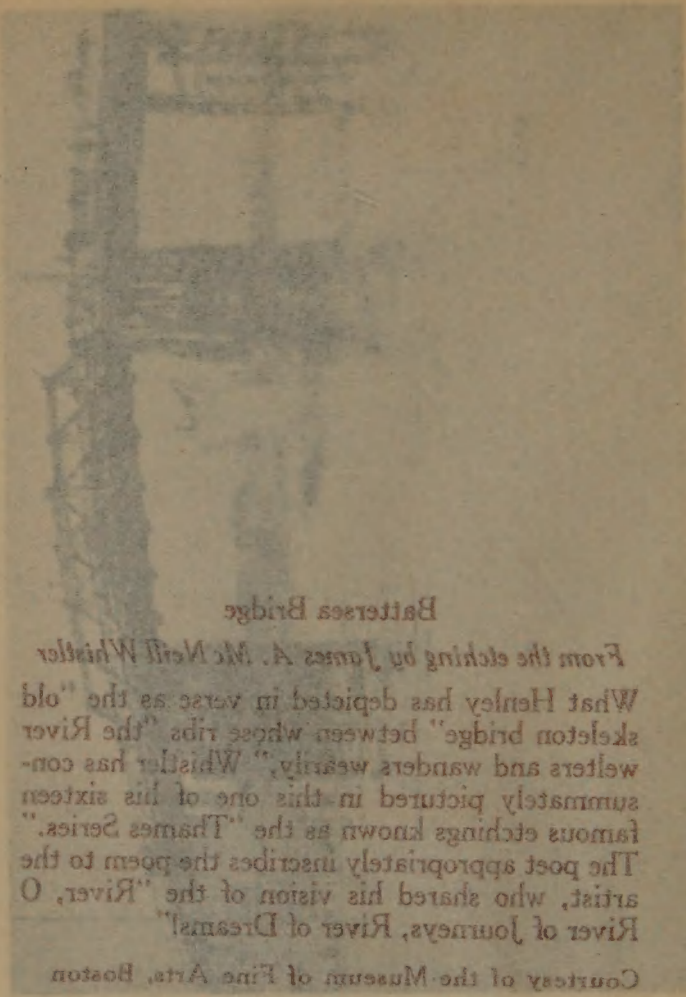
Battersea Bridge

From the etching by James A. McNeill Whistler

What Henley has depicted in verse as the "old skeleton bridge" between whose ribs "the River welters and wanders wearily," Whistler has consummately pictured in this one of his sixteen famous etchings known as the "Thames Series." The poet appropriately inscribes the poem to the artist, who shared his vision of the "River, O River of Journeys, River of Dreams!"

Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Battersea Bridge

From the etching by James A. McNeill Whistler

What Henley has depicted in verse as the "old skeleton bridge" between whose ribs "the River welters and wanders weakly," Whistler has consummately pictured in this one of his sixteen famous etchings known as the "Thames Series." The poet appropriately inscribes the poem to the artist, who shared his vision of the "River, O River of Journeys, River of Dreams!"

Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

The Bibelot

A Reprint of Poetry and Prose for Book Lovers, chosen in part from scarce editions and sources not generally known . . . .

VOLUME VIII

TESTIMONIAL EDITION

Edited and
Originally Published by
THOMAS B. MOSHER
Portland, Maine
Mdccccij

New York
Wm. H. Wise & Co.

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1902

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The Bibelot

To the controversy now raging over Mr. William Ernest Henley's alleged malefeasance towards his dead friend we have no wish to allude save in passing. It may be pointed out, however, that wisely or not an everlasting service to the memory of one greater than Stevenson,—to Robert Burns the Man as well as Poet,—was rendered by this same Henley which at the time was just as bitterly resented by all advocates of lath-and-plaster biography. And yet when all is said, and we believe it needed saying, one may still love the real "Lewis that we knew," while the "adorable monster" of family fiction and financially interested friends becomes as it should become a very negligible quantity.

As originally printed London Voluntaries *opened with what is now the second movement in the symphony, "Forth from the dust and din." Five years later in the* Poems *the first section of the poem as here given was added, an exquisite enlargement of the theme with its superb finalé.*

But, being dead, we shall not grieve to die.

This poignant verse seemingly flung down as if to challenge comparison with the

greatest masters of technique does not suffer when contrasted with such sombre magnificence as Shakespeare's

And Death once dead there's no more dying then!—

or with the less familiar but fully as splendid lines of Webster,

We cease to grieve, cease to be fortune's slaves,
Nay, cease to die by dying,—

or, finally with Michael Angelo's

Thou art dead of dying, and art made divine.

That there are many other instances of equally authentic expression scattered throughout Rhymes and Rhythms *no attentive reader will fail to see. Primarily our selections are especially designed to set forth what* vers libre *really is in the hands of a born metrist. Later we shall consider the purely lyric phase of Mr. Henley's poetry—that singing quality of verse which, great as are the attractions of unrhymed metres will hold its own, in English literature at least, indisputably and forever.*

LONDON VOLUNTARIES

(*To Charles Whibley*)

1890—1892

"In the *London Voluntaries* . . . What a sense of the poetry of cities, that rarer than pastoral poetry, the romance of what lies beneath our eyes, in the humanity of streets, if we have but the vision and the point of view! Here, at last, is a poet who can so enlarge the limits of his verse as to take in London. And I think that might be the test of poetry which professes to be modern: its capacity for dealing with London, with what one sees or might see there, indoors and out. . . .

But I find myself returning to the *London Voluntaries* as perhaps the most individual, the most characteristically modern, and the most entirely successful, of Mr. Henley's work in verse. Here the subject is the finest of modern subjects, the pageant of London. Intensely personal is the feeling that transfuses the picture, it is with a brush of passionate impressionism that he paints for us the London of midsummer nights, London at "the golden end" of October afternoon, London cowering in winter under the Wind-Fiend "out of the poisonous east," London in all the ecstasy of spring. The style is freer, the choice of words, the direction of rhythms, more sure, the language more select and effectual in eloquence, than elsewhere. There is no eccentricity in rhythms, no experimentalizing, nothing tentative. There is something classical, a note (shall we say?) of *Lycidas*, in these most modern poems, almost as if modernity had become classical. The outcome of many experiments, they have passed beyond the stage into the stage of existence."

ARTHUR SYMONS.

(*Studies in Two Literatures*, 1897.)

I

Grave

St. Margaret's bells,
Quiring their innocent, old-world canticles,
Sing in the storied air
All rosy-and-golden, as with memories
Of woods at evensong, and sands and seas
Disconsolate for that the night is nigh.
O, the low, lingering lights! The large last gleam
(Hark! how those brazen choristers cry and call!)
Touching these solemn ancientries, and there,
The silent River ranging tide-mark high
And the callow, grey-faced Hospital,
With the strange glimmer and glamour of a dream!
The Sabbath peace is in the slumbrous trees,
And from the wistful, the fast-widowing sky
(Hark! how those plangent comforters call and cry!)
Falls as in August plots late roseleaves fall.
The sober Sabbath stir —
Leisurely voices, desultory feet! —
Comes from the dry, dust-coloured street,
Where in their summer frocks the girls go by,
And sweethearts lean and loiter and confer,
Just as they did an hundred years ago,
Just as an hundred years to come they will: —

When you and I, Dear Love, lie lost and low,
And sweet-throats none our welkin shall fulfil,
Nor any sunset fade serene and slow;
But, being dead, we shall not grieve to die.

II

Andante con moto

FORTH from the dust and din,
The crush, the heat, the many-spotted glare,
The odour and sense of life and lust aflare,
The wrangle and jangle of unrests,
Let us take horse, dear heart, take horse and win —
As from swart August to the green lap of May —
To quietness and the fresh and fragrant breasts
Of the still, delicious night, not yet aware
In any of her innumerable nests
Of that first sudden plash of dawn,
Clear, sapphirine, luminous, large,
Which tells that soon the flowing springs of day
In deep and ever deeper eddies drawn
Forward and up, in wider and wider way
Shall float the sands and brim the shores
On this our haunch of Earth, as round she roars
And spins into the outlook of the Sun
(The Lord's first gift, the Lord's especial charge)
With light, with living light, from marge to marge,
Until the course He set and staked be run.

Through street and square, through square and street,
Each with his home-grown quality of dark
And violated silence, loud and fleet,
Waylaid by a merry ghost at every lamp,

The hansom wheels and plunges. Hark, O hark,
Sweet, how the old mare's bit and chain
Ring back a rough refrain
Upon the marked and cheerful tramp
Of her four shoes! Here is the Park,
And O the languid midsummer wafts adust,
The tired midsummer blooms!
O the mysterious distances, the glooms
Romantic, the august
And solemn shapes! At night this City of Trees
Turns to a tryst of vague and strange
And monstrous Majesties,
Let loose from some dim underworld to range
These terrene vistas till their twilight sets:
When, dispossessed of wonderfulness, they stand
Beggared and common, plain to all the land
For stooks of leaves! And lo! the wizard hour
Whose shining, silent sorcery hath such power!
Still, still the streets, between their carcanets
Of linking gold, are avenues of sleep:
But see how gable ends and parapets
In gradual beauty and significance
Emerge! And did you hear
That little twitter-and-cheep,
Breaking inordinately loud and clear
On this still, spectral, exquisite atmosphere?
'Tis a first nest at matins! And behold
A rakehell cat — how furtive and acold!

A spent witch homing from some infamous dance —
Obscene, quick-trotting, see her tip and fade
Through shadowy railings into a pit of shade!
And lo! a little wind and shy,
The smell of ships (that earnest of romance),
A sense of space and water, and thereby
A lamplit bridge ouching the troubled sky,
And look, O look! a tangle of silver gleams
And dusky lights, our River and all his dreams,
His dreams of a dead past that cannot die!

What miracle is happening in the air,
Charging the very texture of the grey
With something luminous and rare?
The night goes out like an ill-parcelled fire,
And, as one lights a candle, it is day.
The extinguisher that fain would strut for spire
On the formal little church is not yet green
Across the water: but the house-tops nigher,
The corner-lines, the chimneys — look how clean,
How new, how naked! See the batch of boats,
Here at the stairs, washed in the fresh-sprung beam!
And those are barges that were goblin floats,
Black, hag-steered, fraught with devilry and dream!
And in the piles the water frolics clear,
The ripples into loose rings wander and flee,
And we — we can behold that could but hear
The ancient River singing as he goes

New-mailed in morning to the ancient Sea.
The gas burns lank and jaded in its glass:
The old Ruffian soon shall yawn himself awake,
And light his pipe, and shoulder his tools, and take
His hobnailed way to work!
Let us too pass.
Through these long blindfold rows
Of casements staring blind to right and left,
Each with his gaze turned inward on some piece
Of life in death's own likeness — Life bereft
Of living looks as by the Great Release
(Perchance of shadow-shapes from shadow-shows),
Whose upshot all men know yet no man knows.

Reach upon reach of burial — so they feel,
These colonies of dreams! And as we steal
Homeward together, but for the buxom breeze
That frolics at our heel,
Greeting the town with news of the summer seas,
We might — thus awed, thus lonely that we are —
Be wandering some depopulated star,
Some world of memories and unbroken graves,
So broods the abounding Silence near and far:
Till even your footfall craves
Forgiveness of the majesty it braves.

III

Scherzando

Down through the ancient Strand
The Spirit of October, mild and boon
And sauntering, takes his way
This golden end of afternoon,
As though the corn stood yellow in all the land
And the ripe apples dropped to the harvest-moon.

Lo! the round sun, half down the western slope —
Seen as along an unglazed telescope —
Lingers and lolls, loth to be done with day:
Gifting the long, lean, lanky street
And its abounding confluences of being
With aspects generous and bland:
Making a thousand harnesses to shine
As with new ore from some enchanted mine,
And every horse's coat so full of sheen
He looks new-tailored, and every 'bus feels clean,
And never a hansom but is worth the feeing;
And every jeweller within the pale
Offers a real Arabian Night for sale;
And even the roar
Of the strong streams of toil that pause and pour
Eastward and westward sounds suffused —
Seems as it were bemused
And blurred, and like the speech

Of lazy seas upon a lotus-eating beach —
With this enchanted lustrousness,
This mellow magic, that (as a man's caress
Brings back to some faded face beloved before
A heavenly shadow of the grace it wore
Ere the poor eyes were minded to beseech)
Old things transfigure, and you hail and bless
Their looks of long-lapsed loveliness once more;
Till the sedate and mannered elegance
Of Clement's is all tinctured with romance;
The while the fanciful, formal, finicking charm
Of Bride's, that madrigal in stone,
Glows flushed and warm
And beauteous with a beauty not its own;
And the high majesty of Paul's
Uplifts a voice of living light, and calls —
Calls to his millions to behold and see
How goodly this his London Town can be!

For earth and sky and air
Are golden everywhere,
And golden with a gold so suave and fine
The looking on it lifts the heart like wine.
Trafalgar Square
(The fountains volleying golden glaze)
Gleams like an angel-market. High aloft
Over his couchant Lions in a haze
Shimmering and bland and soft,

A dust of chrysoprase,
Our Sailor takes the golden gaze
Of the saluting sun, and flames superb
As once he flamed it on his ocean round.
The dingy dreariness of the picture-place,
Turned very nearly bright,
Takes on a certain dismal grace,
And shows not all a scandal to the ground
The very blind man pottering on the kerb,
Among the posies and the ostrich feathers
And the rude voices touched with all the weathers
Of all the varying year,
Shares in the universal alms of light.
The windows, with their fleeting, flickering fires,
The height and spread of frontage shining sheer,
The glistering signs, the rejoicing roofs and spires —
'Tis El Dorado — El Dorado plain,
The Golden City! And when a girl goes by,
Look! as she turns her glancing head,
A call of gold is floated from her ear!
Golden, all golden! In a golden glory,
Long lapsing down a golden coasted sky,
The day not dies but seems
Dispersed in wafts and drifts of gold, and shed
Upon a past of golden song and story
And memories of gold and golden dreams.

IV

Largo e mesio

Out of the poisonous East,
Over a continent of blight,
Like a maleficent Influence released
From the most squalid cellarage of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the abominable —
The hangman wind that tortures temper and light —
Comes slouching, sullen and obscene,
Hard on the skirts of the embittered night:
And in a cloud unclean
Of excremental humours, roused to strife
By the operation of some ruinous change
Wherever his evil mandate run and range
Into a dire intensity of life,
A craftsman at his bench, he settles down
To the grim job of throttling London Town.

And, by a jealous lightlessness beset
That might have oppressed the dragons of old time
Crunching and groping in the abysmal slime,
A cave of cut-throat thoughts and villainous dreams,
Hag-rid and crying with cold and dirt and wet,
The afflicted city, prone from mark to mark
In shameful occultation, seems
A nightmare labyrinthine, dim and drifting,
With wavering gulfs and antic heights and shifting

Rent in the stuff of a material dark
Wherein the lamplight, scattered and sick and pale,
Shows like the leper's living blotch of bale:
Uncoiling monstrous into street on street
Paven with perils, teeming with mischance,
Where man and beast go blindfold and in dread,
Working with oaths and threats and faltering feet
Somewhither in the hideousness ahead;
Working through wicked airs and deadly dews
That make the laden robber grim askance
At the good places in his black romance,
And the poor, loitering harlot rather choose
Go pinched and pined to bed
Than lurk and shiver and curse her wretched way
From arch to arch, scouting some threepenny prey.

Forgot his dawns and far-flushed afterglows,
His green garlands and windy eyots forgot,
The old Father-River flows,
His watchfires cores of menace in the gloom,
As he came oozing from the Pit, and bore,
Sunk in his filthily transfigured sides,
Shoals of dishonoured dead to tumble and rot
In the squalor of the universal shore:
His voices sounding through the gruesome air
As from the ferry where the Boat of Doom
With her blaspheming cargo reels and rides:
The while his children, the brave ships,

No more adventurous and fair
Nor tripping it light of heel as home-bound brides,
But infamously enchanted,
Huddle together in the foul eclipse,
Or feel their course by inches desperately,
As through a tangle of alleys murder-haunted,
From sinister reach to reach — out — out — to sea.

And Death the while —
Death with his well-worn, lean, professional smile,
Death in his threadbare working trim —
Comes to your bedside, unannounced and bland,
And with expert, inevitable hand
Feels at your windpipe, fingers you in the lung,
Or flicks the clot well into the labouring heart:
Thus signifying unto old and young,
However hard of mouth or wild of whim,
'Tis time — 'tis time by his ancient watch — to part
With looks and women and talk and drink and art:
And you go humbly after him
To a mean suburban lodging: on the way
To what or where
Not Death, who is old and very wise, can say:
And you — how should you care
So long as, unreclaimed of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the insufferable,
Thus vicious and thus patient sits him down
To the black job of burking London Town?

V

Allegro maëstoso

SPRING winds that blow
As over leagues of myrtle-blooms and may;
Bevies of spring clouds trooping slow,
Like matrons heavy-bosomed and aglow
With the mild and placid pride of increase! Nay,
What makes this insolent and comely stream
Of appetence, this freshet of desire
(Milk from the wild breasts of the wilful Day!),
Down Picadilly dance and murmur and gleam
In genial wave on wave and gyre on gyre?
Why does that nymph unparalleled splash and churn
The wealth of her enchanted urn
Till, over-billowing all between
Her cheerful margents grey and living green,
It floats and wanders, glittering and fleeing,
An estuary of the joy of being?
Why should the buxom leafage of the Park
Touch to an ecstasy the act of seeing?
— As if my paramour, my bride of brides,
Lingering and flushed, mysteriously abides
In some dim, eye-proof angle of odorous dark,
Some smiling nook of green-and-golden shade,
In the divine conviction robed and crowned
The globe fulfils his immemorial round
But as the marrying-place of all things made!

There is no man, this deifying day,
But feels the primal blessing in his blood.
The sacred impulse of the May
Brightening like sex made sunshine through her veins,
There is no woman but disdains
To vail the ensigns of her womanhood.
None but, rejoicing, flaunts them as she goes,
Bounteous in looks of her delicious best,
On her inviolable quest:
These with their hopes, with their sweet secrets those,
But all desirable and frankly fair,
As each were keeping some most prosperous tryst,
And in the knowledge went imparadised.
For look! a magical influence everywhere,
Look how the liberal and transfiguring air
Washes this inn of memorable meetings,
This centre of ravishments and gracious greetings,
Till, through its jocund loveliness of length
A tidal-race of lust from shore to shore;
A brimming reach of beauty met with strength,
It shines and sounds like some miraculous dream,
Some vision multitudinous and agleam,
Of happiness as it shall be evermore!

Praise God for giving
Through this His messenger among the days
His word the life He gave is thrice-worth living!
For Pan, the bountiful, imperious Pan —

Not dead, not dead, as dreamers feigned,
But the lush genius of a million Mays
Renewing his beneficent endeavour! —
Still reigns and triumphs, as he hath triumphed and
reigned
Since in the dim blue dawn of time
The universal ebb-and-flow began,
To sound his ancient music, and prevails
By the persuasion of his mighty rhyme
Here in this radiant and immortal street
Lavishly and omnipotently as ever
In the open hills, the undissembling dales,
The laughing-places of the juvenile earth.
For lo! the wills of man and woman meet,
Meet and are moved, each unto each endeared
As once in Eden's prodigal bowers befell,
To share his shameless, elemental mirth
In one great act of faith, while deep and strong,
Incomparably nerved and cheered,
The enormous heart of London joys to beat
To the measures of his rough, majestic song:
The lewd, perennial, overmastering spell
That keeps the rolling universe ensphered
And life and all for which life lives to long
Wanton and wondrous and for ever well.

RHYMES AND RHYTHMS
1889—1892

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.
From camp and church, the fireside and the street,
She beckons forth, and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending, cool and green
And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
And radiant faces look upon and greet
This last of all your lovers, and to meet
Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean. . . .
The ways of Death are soothing and serene.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

"I SOMETIMES wonder whether it is an unreasonable prejudice that inclines me to question the wisdom of doing without rhyme in measures that seem to demand it. The experiment has been made by Heine, by Matthew Arnold, and undoubtedly with a certain measure of success. But to do without rhyme is to do without one of the beauties of poetry, I should say one of the inherent beauties. Our ears as so accustomed to it that they have come to require it, and it is certain, for one thing, that no rhymeless lyric could become really popular, and extremely likely, for another, that an innovation which begins by dropping rhyme will end by abandoning rhythm. It has been tried in France, persistently, most ingeniously, never, I think, successfully. The example of the French Decadents should be a warning to those in England who are anxious to loosen the bonds of verse. Everything that can be done has been done; there are treatises on poetical orchestration as well as examples of it; there is a *Pélerin Passionné* and its little fame to boast of. . . .

Yet, supposing even that one admits the legitimacy of the experiment, is not the inexpediency of it somewhat strongly indicated by the deeper impressiveness, the more certain mastery of the *London Voluntaries* which are rhymed? There, surely, is Mr. Henley's most satisfactory work, his entirely characteristic rendering of modern subjects in appropriate form. A new subject, an individual treatment, a form which retains all that is helpful in tradition, while admitting all that is valuable in experiment; that, I think, is modernity becoming classical."

ARTHUR SYMONS.

PROLOGUE

SOMETHING *is dead . . .*
The grace of sunset solitudes, the march
Of the solitary moon, the pomp and power
Of round on round of shining soldier-stars
Patrolling space, the bounties of the sun —
Sovran, tremendous, unimaginable —
The multitudinous friendliness of the sea,
Possess no more — no more.

Something is dead . . .
The autumn rain-rot deeper and wider soaks
And spreads, the burden of winter heavier weighs,
His melancholy close and closer yet
Cleaves, and those incantations of the Spring
That made the heart a centre of miracles
Grow formal, and the wonder-working hours
Arise no more — no more.

Something is dead . . .
'Tis time to creep in close about the fire
And tell grey tales of what we were, and dream
Old dreams and faded, and as we may rejoice
In the young life that round us leaps and laughs,
A fountain in the sunshine, in the pride
Of God's best gift that to us twain returns,
Dear Heart, no more — no more.

I

WHERE forlorn sunsets flare and fade
On desolate sea and lonely sand,
Out of the silence and the shade
What is the voice of strange command
Calling you still, as friend calls friend
With love that cannot brook delay,
To rise and follow the ways that wend
Over the hills and far away?

Hark in the city, street on street
A roaring reach of death and life,
Of vortices that clash and fleet
And ruin in appointed strife,
Hark to it calling, calling clear,
Calling until you cannot stay
From dearer things than your own most dear
Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of ebb and flow,
Out of the sight of lamp and star,
It calls you where the good winds blow.
And the unchanging meadows are:
From faded hopes and hopes agleam,
It calls you, calls you night and day
Beyond the dark into the dream
Over the hills and far away.

II

A DESOLATE shore,
The sinister seduction of the Moon,
The menace of the irreclaimable Sea.

Flaunting, tawdry and grim,
From cloud to cloud along her beat,
Leering her battered and inveterate leer,
She signals where he prowls in the dark alone,
Her horrible old man,
Mumbling old oaths and warming
His villainous old bones with villainous talk—
The secrets of their grisly housekeeping
Since they went out upon the pad
In the first twilight of self-conscious Time:
Growling, obscene and hoarse,
Tales of unnumbered Ships,
Goodly and strong, Companions of the Advance
In some vile alley of the night
Waylaid and bludgeoned—
Dead.

Deep cellared in primeval ooze,
Ruined, dishonoured, spoiled,
They lie where the lean water-worm
Crawls free of their secrets, and their broken sides
Bulge with the slime of life. Thus they abide,

Thus fouled and desecrate,
The summons of the Trumpet, and the while
These Twain, their murderers,
Unravined, imperturabable, unsubdued,
Hang at the heels of their children — She aloft
As in the shining streets,
He as in ambush at some fetid stair.

The stalwart Ships,
The beautiful and bold adventurers!
Stationed out yonder in the isle,
The tall Policeman,
Flashing his bull's-eye, as he peers
About him in the ancient vacancy,
Tells them this way is safety — this way home.

III

SPACE and dread and the dark —
Over a livid stretch of sky
Cloud-monsters crawling like a funeral train
Of huge primeval presences
Stooping beneath the weight
Of some enormous, rudimentary grief;
While in the haunting loneliness
The far sea waits and wanders, with a sound
As of the trailing skirts of Destiny
Passing unseen
To some immitigable end
With her grey henchman, Death.

What larve, what spectre is this
Thrilling the wilderness to life
As with the bodily shape of Fear?
What but a desperate sense,
A strong foreboding of those dim,
Interminable continents, forlorn
And many-silenced in a dusk
Inviolable utterly, and dead
As the poor dead it huddles and swarms and styes
In hugger-mugger through eternity?

Life — life — let there be life!
Better a thousand times the roaring hours

When wave and wind,
Like the Arch-Murderer in flight
From the Avenger at his heel,
Storm through the desolate fastnesses
And wild waste places of the world!

Life — give me life until the end,
That at the very top of being,
The battle-spirit shouting in my blood,
Out of the reddest hell of the fight
I may be snatched and flung
Into the everlasting lull,
The immortal, incommunicable dream.

IV

MIDSUMMER midnight skies,
Midsummer midnight influences and airs,
The shining sensitive silver of the sea
Touched with the strange-hued blazonings of dawn:
And all so solemnly still I seem to hear
The breathing of Life and Death,
The secular Accomplices,
Renewing the visible miracle of the world.

The wistful stars
Shine like good memories. The young morning wind
Blows full of unforgotten hours
As over a region of roses. Life and Death
Sound on — sound on. . . . And the night magical,
Troubled yet comforting, thrills
As if the Enchanted Castle at the heart
Of the wood's dark wonderment
Swung wide his valves and filled the dim sea-banks
With exquisite visitants:
Words fiery-hearted yet, dreams and desires
With living looks intolerable, regrets
Whose voice comes as the voice of an only child
Heard from the grave: shapes of a Might-Have-Been —
Beautiful, miserable, distraught —
The Law no man may baffle denied and slew.

The spell-bound ships stand as at gaze
To let the marvel by. The grey road glooms . . .
Glimmers . . . goes out . . . and there, O there where
it fades,
What grace, what glamour, what wild will,
Transfigure the shadows? Whose,
Heart of my heart, Soul of my soul, but yours?

Ghosts — ghosts — the sapphirine air
Teems with them even to the gleaming ends
Of the wild day-spring! Ghosts,
Everywhere — everywhere — till I and you
At last — dear love, at last! —
Are in the dreaming, even as Life and Death,
Twin-ministers of the unoriginal Will.

V

(TO JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER)

UNDER a stagnant sky,
Gloom out of gloom uncoiling into gloom,
The River, jaded and forlorn,
Welters and wanders wearily — wretchedly — on;
Yet in and out among the ribs
Of the old skeleton bridge, as in the piles
Of some dead lake-built city, full of skulls,
Worm-worn, rat-riddled, mouldy with memories,
Lingers to babble, to a broken tune
(Once, O the unvoiced music of my heart!)
So melancholy a soliloquy
It sounds as it might tell
The secret of the unending grief-in-grain,
The terror of Time and Change and Death,
That wastes this floating, transitory world.

What of the incantation
That forced the huddled shapes on yonder shore
To take and wear the night
Like a material majesty?
That touched the shafts of wavering fire
About this miserable welter and wash —
(River, O River of Journeys, River of Dreams! —)
Into long, shining signals from the panes

Of an enchanted pleasure-house
Where life and life might live life lost in life
For ever and evermore?

O Death! O Change! O Time!
Without you, O the insufferable eyes
Of these poor Might-Have-Beens,
These fatuous, ineffectual Yesterdays!

VI

The shadow of Dawn;
Stillness and stars and over-mastering dreams
Of Life and Death and Sleep;
Heard over gleaming flats the old unchanging sound
Of the old unchanging Sea.

My soul and yours —
O hand in hand let us fare forth, two ghosts,
Into the ghostliness,
The infinite and abounding solitudes,
Beyond — O beyond! — beyond . . .

Here in the porch
Upon the multitudinous silences
Of the kingdoms of the grave,
We twain are you and I — two ghosts Omnipotence
Can touch no more — no more!

VII

TREES and the menace of night;
Then a long, lonely, leaden mere
Backed by a desolate fell
As by a spectral battlement; and then,
Low-brooding, interpenetrating all,
A vast, grey, listless, inexpressive sky,
So beggared, so incredibly bereft
Of starlight and the song of racing worlds
It might have bellied down upon the Void
Where as in terror Light was beginning to be.

Hist! In the trees fulfilled of night
(Night and the wretchedness of the sky)
Is it the hurry of the rain?
Or the noise of a drive of the Dead
Streaming before the irresistible Will
Through the strange dusk of this, the Debatable Land
Between their place and ours?

Like the forgetfulness
Of a work-a-day world made visible,
A mist falls from the melancholy sky:
A messenger from some lost and loving soul,
Hopeless, far wandered, dazed
Here in the provinces of life,
A great white moth fades miserably past.

Thro' the trees in the strange dead night,
Under the vast dead sky,
Forgetting and forgot, a drift of Dead
Sets to the mystic mere, the phantom fell,
And the unimagined vastitudes beyond.

VIII

(TO A. C.)

WHAT should the Trees,
Midsummer-manifold, each one,
Voluminous, a labyrinth of life —
What should such things of bulk and multitude
Yield of their huge, unutterable selves,
To the random importunity of Day,
The blabbing journalist?
Alert to snatch and publish hour by hour
Their greenest hints, their leafiest privacies,
How can he other than endure
The ruminant irony that foists him off
With broad-blown falsehoods, or the obviousness
Of laughter flickering back from shine to shade,
And disappearance of homing birds,
And frolicsome freaks
Of little boughs that frisk with little boughs?

Now, at the word
Of the ancient, sacerdotal Night,
Night of the many secrets, whose effect —
Transfiguring, hierophantic, dread —
Themselves alone may fully apprehend,
They tremble and are changed:
In each, the uncouth individual soul

Looms forth and glooms
Essential, and, their bodily presences
Touched with inordinate significance,
Wearing the darkness like the livery
Of some mysterious and tremendous guild,
They brood — they menace —they appal:
Or the anguish of prophecy tears them, and they wring
Wild hands of warning in the face
Of some inevitable advance of doom:
Or, each to the other bending, beckoning, signing,
As in some monstrous market-place,
They pass the news, these Gossips of the Prime,
In that old speech their forefathers
Learned on the lawns of Eden, ere they heard
The troubled voice of Eve
Naming the wondering folk of Paradise.

Your sense is sealed, or you should hear them tell
The tale of their dim life and all
Its compost of experience: how the Sun
Spreads them their daily feast,
Sumptuous, of light, firing them as with wine;
Of the old Moon's fitful solicitude
And those mild messages the Stars
Descend in silver silences and dews;
Or what the buxom West,
Wanton with wading in the swirl of the wheat,
Said, and their leafage laughed;

And how the wet-winged Angel of the Rain
Came whispering . . . whispering; and the gifts of the
Year —
The sting of the stirring sap
Under the wizardry of the young-eyed Spring,
Their summer amplitudes of pomp
And rich autumnal melancholy, and the shrill,
Embittered housewifery
Of the lean Winter: all such things,
And with them all the goodness of the Master
Whose right hand blesses with increase and life,
Whose left hand honours with decay and death.

So, under the constraint of Night,
These gross and simple creatures,
Each in his scores of rings, which rings are years,
A servant of the Will.
And God, the Craftsman, as He walks
The floor of His workshop, hearkens, full of cheer
In thus accomplishing
The aims of His miraculous artistry.

IX

You played and sang a snatch of song,
  A song that all-too well we knew;
But whither had flown the ancient wrong;
  And was it really I and you?
O since the end of life's to live
  And pay in pence the common debt,
What should it cost us to forgive
  Whose daily task is to forget?

You babbled in the well-known voice —
  Not new, not new, the words you said.
You touched me off that famous poise,
  That old effect, of neck and head.
Dear, was it really you and I?
  In truth the riddle's ill to read,
So many are the deaths we die
  Before we can be dead indeed.

EPILOGUE

THESE, *to you now, O, more than ever now —*
Now that the Antient Enemy
Has passed, and we, we two that are one, have seen
A piece of perfect Life
Turn to so ravishing a shape of Death
The Arch-Discomforter might well have smiled
In pity and pride,
Even as he bore his lovely and innocent spoil
From those home-kingdoms he left desolate!

Poor windlestraws
On the great, sullen, roaring pool of Time
And Chance and Change, I know!
But they are yours, as I am, till we attain
That end for which we make, we two that are one:
A little, exquisite Ghost
Between us, smiling with the serenest eyes
Seen in this world, and calling, calling still
In that clear voice whose infinite subtleties
Of sweetness, thrilling back across the grave,
Break the poor heart to hear: —
'Come, Dadsie, come!
Mama, how long — how long!'

July 1897.

The Bibelot

Fifty years ago the well known London publisher, Edward Moxon, was hoaxed into buying and publishing what purported to be a series of twenty-five newly discovered letters by the poet Shelley, which, by the merest accident, but fortunately before the volume could be put into circulation, were proved to be forgeries. As an immediate result of this discovery the book was suppressed and is now a rarity that few collectors can hope to own. One copy in the original purple cloth (out of the possible six which passed from Moxon's control), fell into the hands of Mr. Thomas J. Wise—to whose grasp and keep most of earth's bibliophilic treasures gravitate!—a copy we may fairly assume to have served as the basis for the Shelley Society edition,[1] *and thence our present Bibelet reprint.*

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[1] *An Essay | on | Percy Bysshe Shelley | By | Robert Browning | Being a Reprint of the Introductory Essay prefixed to the volume of | [25 spurious] Letters of Shelley published by | Edward Moxon in 1852. | Edited | By W. Tyas Harden | London | Published for the Shelley Society | By Reeves and Turner 196 Strand | 1888.*
Issued in green paper boards, lettered both upon the side and up the back. Five hundred copies

As pointed out by Mr. Furnivall, "the main subject of the essay is Shelley, his life, his nature, work, and art. . . But it was not the praise or estimate of Shelley" alone; "it was Browning's statement of his own aim in his own work, both as objective and subjective poet, . . that makes the essay a necessity to every student of Browning who would understand him."

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were printed, all upon Dutch hand-made paper. Four additional examples were privately printed upon pure vellum. Some copies have an inserted slip containing two Errata. *The volume was a gift to the Shelley Society from the editor, Mr. W. Tyas Harden. The published price was Six Shillings.*

As duly set forth upon the title-page transcribed above, Mr. Browning's Essay *was first printed in an octavo volume of* Letters, *presumably by Percy Bysshe Shelley, published by Moxon in 1852, with the following title:*

Letters | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | With an Introductory Essay, | by | Robert Browning, | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street, | 1852. Octavo. Pp. viii + 165. Mr. Browning's 'Essay' occupies pp. 1-44.—THOMAS J. WISE: Literary Anecdotes *of the Nineteenth Century, Vol. I, pp. 391-393. (London, 1895.)*

Other reprints are as follows: first, in order of date, in The Browning Society Papers, No. 1, *for 1881; second, in F. J. Furnivall's* Bibliography of Browning (*second edition*), *1882. Also included in the* Camberwell *Browning,* (*vol. xii*), *and* Cambridge Browning, *with some minor misprints,* (*New York and Boston*).

An Essay on Percy Bysshe Shelley
By
Robert Browning.

MEMORABILIA.

I

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

II

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter

III

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

IV

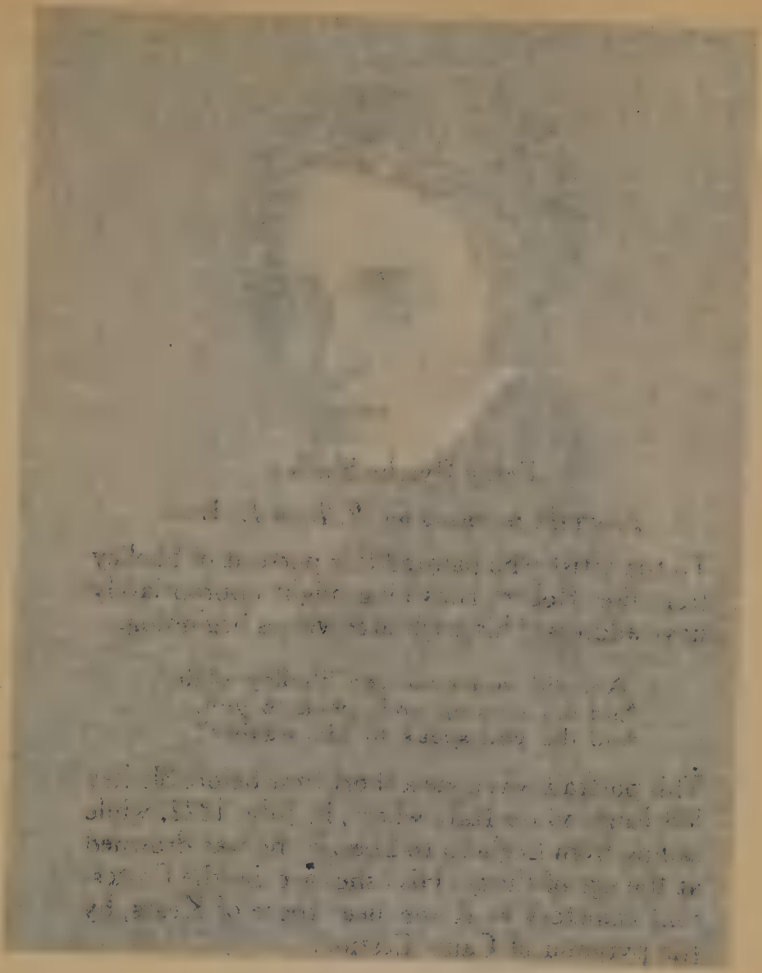
For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

ROBERT BROWNING.

"THE circumstances under which the following 'Essay' was first published in 1852 were so far unfortunate as that a speedy limit was put to its circulation by the discovery that the letters which it ushered into the world were a literary fraud. But if ever the doing of evil is to be excused because of some resultant good, here is a case which is eminently entitled to such consideration, for we may fairly conclude, and not without a touch of humour, if not also without a tremor of anxiety, that if the fraud had not been perpetrated the essay might never have been penned. Equally fortunate was the fact that some few copies escaped the control and the recall of the publisher, which however were so few that the book is now one of those *opima spolia* that collectors covet and dealers delight in.

For if the letters were spurious and worthless the essay was genuine and most valuable. It was surely by some occult and happy inspiration that the writer treated his subject both broadly and deeply, not toying with the handful of letters, but passing to their supposed author and taking the opportunity to analyse his genius and to vindicate his character. So ably was this done, with such keen appreciation of intellectual qualities and such generous discernment of moral probabilities, that the essay must always remain essential alike to the students of Browning and of Shelley, and deserves to stand both as a prologue to the writings and as an epilogue to the life of Shelley."

W. TYAS HARDEN.



Percy Bysshe Shelley

From the painting by William E. West

To the artist who painted this portrait of Shelley from life, Robert Browning might appropriately have addressed his celebrated verses beginning:

> "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
> And did he stop and speak to you,
> And did you speak to him again?"

This portrait was done a short time before Shelley left England for Italy where, in July, 1822, while sailing from Leghorn to Spezzia, he was drowned at the age of thirty. His ashes are in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, near those of Keats, by the pyramid of Caius Cestius.

AN ESSAY ON SHELLEY

An opportunity having presented itself for the acquisition of a series of unedited letters by Shelley, all more or less directly supplementary to and illustrative of the collection already published by Mr. Moxon, that gentleman has decided on securing them. They will prove an acceptable addition to a body of correspondence, the value of which towards a right understanding of its author's purpose and work, may be said to exceed that of any similar contribution exhibiting the worldly relations of a poet whose genius has operated by a different law.

Doubtless we accept gladly the biography of an objective poet, as the phrase now goes; one whose endeavour has been to reproduce things external (whether the phenomena of the scenic universe, or the manifested action of the human heart and brain) with an immediate reference, in every case, to the common eye and apprehension of his fellow men, assumed capable of receiving and profiting by this reproduction. It has been obtained through the poet's double faculty of seeing external objects more clearly,

widely, and deeply, than is possible to the average mind, at the same time that he is so acquainted and in sympathy with its narrower comprehension as to be careful to supply it with no other materials than it can combine into an intelligible whole. The auditory of such a poet will include, not only the intelligences which, save for such assistance, would have missed the deeper meaning and enjoyment of the original objects, but also the spirits of a like endowment with his own, who, by means of his abstract, can forthwith pass to the reality it was made from, and either corroborate their impressions of things known already, or supply themselves with new from whatever shows in the inexhaustible variety of existence may have hitherto escaped their knowledge. Such a poet is properly the ποιητης, the fashioner; and the thing fashioned, his poetry, will of necessity be substantive, projected from himself and distinct. We are ignorant what the inventor of "Othello" conceived of that fact as he beheld it in completeness, how he accounted for it, under what known law he registered its nature, or to what unknown law he traced its coincidence. We

learn only what he intended we should learn by that particular exercise of his power,—the fact itself,—which, with its infinite significances, each of us receives for the first time as a creation, and is hereafter left to deal with, as, in proportion to his own intelligence, he best may. We are ignorant, and would fain be otherwise.

Doubtless, with respect to such a poet, we covet his biography. We desire to look back upon the process of gathering together in a lifetime, the materials of the work we behold entire; of elaborating, perhaps under difficulty and with hindrance, all that is familiar to our admiration in the apparent facility of success. And the inner impulse of this effort and operation, what induced it? Did a soul's delight in its own extended sphere of vision set it, for the gratification of an insuppressible power, on labour, as other men are set on rest? Or did a sense of duty or of love lead it to communicate its own sensations to mankind? Did an irresistible sympathy with men compel it to bring down and suit its own provision of knowledge and beauty to their narrow scope? Did the personality of such an one stand

like an open watch-tower in the midst of the territory it is erected to gaze on, and were the storms and calms, the stars and meteors, its watchman was wont to report of, the habitual variegation of his every-day life, as they glanced across its open roof or lay reflected on its four-square parapet? Or did some sunken and darkened chamber of imagery witness, in the artificial illumination of every storied compartment we are permitted to contemplate, how rare and precious were the outlooks through here and there an embrasure upon a world beyond, and how blankly would have pressed on the artificer the boundary of his daily life, except for the amorous diligence with which he had rendered permanent by art whatever came to diversify the gloom? Still, fraught with instruction and interest as such details undoubtedly are, we can, if needs be, dispense with them. The man passes, the work remains. The work speaks for itself, as we say: and the biography of the worker is no more necessary to an understanding or enjoyment of it, than is a model or anatomy of some tropical tree, to the right tasting of the fruit we are familiar with on the market-

stall,—or a geologist's map and stratification, to the prompt recognition of the hill-top, our land-mark of every day.

We turn with stronger needs to the genius of an opposite tendency—the subjective poet of modern classification. He, gifted like the objective poet with the fuller perception of nature and man, is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below as to the one above him, the supreme Intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth,—an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's own soul. Not what man sees, but what God sees—the *Ideas* of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is toward these that he struggles. Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has to do; and he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees,

but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone. He does not paint pictures and hang them on the walls, but rather carries them on the retina of his own eyes: we must look deep into his human eyes, to see those pictures on them. He is rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence. That effluence cannot be easily considered in abstraction from his personality,—being indeed the very radiance and aroma of his personality, projected from it but not separated. Therefore, in our approach to the poetry, we necessarily approach the personality of the poet; in apprehending it we apprehend him, and certainly we cannot love it without loving him. Both for love's and for understanding's sake we desire to know him, and as readers of his poetry must be readers of his biography also.

I shall observe, in passing, that it seems not so much from any essential distinction in the faculty of the two poets or in the nature of the objects contemplated by either, as in the more immediate adaptability of these objects to the distinct purpose of each,

that the objective poet, in his appeal to the aggregate human mind, chooses to deal with the doings of men (the result of which dealing, in its pure form, when even description, as suggesting a describer, is dispensed with, is what we call dramatic poetry), while the subjective poet, whose study has been himself, appealing through himself to the absolute Divine mind, prefers to dwell upon those external scenic appearances which strike out most abundantly and uninterruptedly his inner light and power, selects that silence of the earth and sea in which he can best hear the beating of his individual heart, and leaves the noisy, complex, yet imperfect exhibitions of nature in the manifold experience of man around him, which serve only to distract and suppress the working of his brain. These opposite tendencies of genius will be more readily descried in their artistic effect than in their moral spring and cause. Pushed to an extreme and manifested as a deformity, they will be seen plainest of all in the fault of either artist, when subsidiarily to the human interest of his work his occasional illustrations from scenic nature are introduced as in the earlier works of the

originative painters—men and women filling the foreground with consummate mastery, while mountain, grove and rivulet show like an anticipatory revenge on that succeeding race of landscape-painters whose "figures" disturb the perfection of their earth and sky. It would be idle to inquire, of these two kinds of poetic faculty in operation, which is the higher or even rarer endowment. If the subjective might seem to be the ultimate requirement of every age, the objective, in the strictest state, must still retain its original value. For it is with this world, as starting point and basis alike, that we shall always have to concern ourselves: the world is not to be learned and thrown aside, but reverted to and relearned. The spiritual comprehension may be infinitely subtilised, but the raw material it operates upon, must remain. There may be no end of the poets who communicate to us what they see in an object with reference to their own individuality; what it was before they saw it, in reference to the aggregate human mind, will be as desirable to know as ever. Nor is there any reason why these two modes of poetic faculty may not issue hereafter from

the same poet in successive perfect works, examples of which, according to what are now considered the exigencies of art, we have hitherto possessed in distinct individuals only. A mere running in of the one faculty upon the other, is, of course, the ordinary circumstance. Far more rarely it happens that either is found so decidedly prominent and superior, as to be pronounced comparatively pure: while of the perfect shield, with the gold and the silver side set up for all comers to challenge, there has as yet been no instance. Either faculty in its eminent state is doubtless conceded by Providence as a best gift to men, according to their especial want. There is a time when the general eye has, so to speak, absorbed its fill of the phenomena around it, whether spiritual or material, and desires rather to learn the exacter significance of what it possesses, than to receive any augmentation of what is possessed. Then is the opportunity for the poet of loftier vision, to lift his fellows, with their half-apprehensions, up to his own sphere, by intensifying the import of details and rounding the universal meaning. The influence of such an achievement will not

All Saints Academy

soon die out. A tribe of successors (Homerides) working more or less in the same spirit, dwell on his discoveries and reinforce his doctrine; till, at unawares, the world is found to be subsisting wholly on the shadow of a reality, on sentiments diluted from passions, on the tradition of a fact, the convention of a moral, the straw of last year's harvest. Then is the imperative call for the appearance of another sort of poet, who shall at once replace this intellectual rumination of food swallowed long ago, by a supply of the fresh and living swathe; getting at new substance by breaking up the assumed wholes into parts of independent and unclassed value, careless of the unknown laws for recombining them (it will be the business of yet another poet to suggest those hereafter), prodigal of objects for men's outer and not inner sight, shaping for their uses a new and different creation from the last, which it displaces by the right of life over death,—to endure until, in the inevitable process, its very sufficiency to itself shall require, at length, an exposition of its affinity to something higher,—when the positive yet conflicting facts shall again precipitate

themselves under a harmonising law, and one more degree will be apparent for a poet to climb in that mighty ladder, of which however cloud-involved and undefined may glimmer the topmost step, the world dares no longer doubt that its gradations ascend.

Such being the two kinds of artists, it is naturally, as I have shown, with the biography of the subjective poet that we have the deeper concern. Apart from his recorded life altogether, we might fail to determine with satisfactory precision to what class his productions belong, and what amount of praise is assignable to the producer. Certainly, in the face of any conspicuous achievement of genius, philosophy, no less than sympathetic instinct, warrants our belief in a great moral purpose having mainly inspired even where it does not visibly look out of the same. Greatness in a work suggests an adequate instrumentality; and none of the lower incitements, however they may avail to initiate or even effect many considerable displays of power, simulating the nobler inspiration to which they are mistakenly referred, have been found able, under the ordinary conditions of humanity, to task themselves to the

end of so exacting a performance as a poet's complete work. As soon will the galvanism, that provokes to violent action the muscles of a corpse, induce it to cross the chamber steadily: sooner. The love of displaying power for the display's sake, the love of riches, of distinction, of notoriety,—the desire of a triumph over rivals, and the vanity in the applause of friends,—each and all of such whetted appetites grow intenser by exercise and increasingly sagacious as to the best and readiest means of self-appeasement,—while for any of their ends, whether the money or the pointed finger of the crowd, or the flattery and hate to heart's content, there are cheaper prices to pay, they will all find soon enough, than the bestowment of a life upon a labour, hard, slow, and not sure. Also, assuming the proper moral aim to have produced a work, there are many and various states of an aim: it may be more intense than clear-sighted, or too easily satisfied with a lower field of activity than a steadier aspiration would reach. All the bad poetry in the world (accounted poetry, that is, by its affinities) will be found to result from some one of the

infinite degrees of discrepancy between the attributes of the poet's soul, occasioning a want of correspondency between his work and the verities of nature,—issuing in poetry, false under whatever form, which shows a thing not as it is to mankind generally, nor as it is to the particular describer, but as it is supposed to be for some unreal neutral mood, midway between both and of value to neither, and living its brief minute simply through the indolence of whoever accepts it or his incapacity to denounce a cheat. Although of such depths of failure there can be no question here, we must in every case betake ourselves to the review of a poet's life ere we determine some of the nicer questions concerning his poetry, — more especially if the performance we seek to estimate aright, has been obstructed and cut short of completion by circumstances,—a disastrous youth or a premature death. We may learn from the biography whether his spirit invariably saw and spoke from the last height to which it had attained. An absolute vision is not for this world, but we are permitted a continual approximation to it, every degree of which in the individual, pro-

vided it exceed the attainment of the masses, must procure him a clear advantage. Did the poet ever attain to a higher platform than where he rested and exhibited a result? Did he know more than he spoke of?

I concede however, in respect to the subject of our study as well as some few other illustrious examples, that the unmistakable quality of the verse would be evidence enough, under usual circumstances, not only of the kind and degree of the intellectual but of the moral constitution of Shelley: the whole personality of the poet shining forward from the poems, without much need of going further to seek it. The "Remains"—produced within a period of ten years, and at a season of life when other men of at all comparable genius have hardly done more than prepare the eye for future sight and the tongue for speech—present us with the complete enginery of a poet, as signal in the excellence of its several adaptitudes as transcendent in the combination of effects,—examples, in fact, of the whole poet's function of beholding with an understanding keenness the universe, nature and man, in their actual state of perfection in

imperfection,—of the whole poet's virtue of being untempted by the manifold partial developments of beauty and good on every side, into leaving them the ultimates he found them,—induced by the facility of the gratification of his own sense of those qualities, or by the pleasure of acquiescence in the short-comings of his predecessors in art, and the pain of disturbing their conventionalisms,—the whole poet's virtue, I repeat, of looking higher than any manifestation yet made of both beauty and good, in order to suggest from the utmost actual realisation of the one a corresponding capability in the other, and out of the calm, purity and energy of nature, to reconstitute and store up for the forthcoming stage of man's being, a gift in repayment of that former gift, in which man's own thought and passion had been lavished by the poet on the else-incompleted magnificence of the sunrise, the else-uninterpreted mystery of the lake,—so drawing out, lifting up, and assimilating this ideal of a future man, thus descried as possible, to the present reality of the poet's soul already arrived at the higher state of development, and still aspirant to elevate and extend itself

in conformity with its still-improving perceptions of, no longer the eventual Human, but the actual Divine. In conjunction with which noble and rare powers, came the subordinate power of delivering these attained results to the world in an embodiment of verse more closely answering to and indicative of the process of the informing spirit, (failing as it occasionally does, in art, only to succeed in highest art),—with a diction more adequate to the task in its natural and acquired richness, its material colour and spiritual transparency,—the whole being moved by and suffused with a music at once of the soul and the sense, expressive both of an external might of sincere passion and an internal fitness and consonancy,—than can be attributed to any other writer whose record is among us. Such was the spheric poetical faculty of Shelley, as its own self-sufficing central light, radiating equally through immaturity and accomplishment, through many fragments and occasional completion, reveals it to a competent judgment.

But the acceptance of this truth by the public, has been retarded by certain objec-

tions which cast us back on the evidence of biography, even with Shelley's poetry in our hands. Except for the particular character of these objections, indeed, the non-appreciation of his contemporaries would simply class, now that it is over, with a series of experiences which have necessarily happened and needlessly been wondered at, ever since the world began, and concerning which any present anger may well be moderated, no less in justice to our forerunners than in policy to ourselves. For the misapprehensiveness of his age is exactly what a poet is sent to remedy; and the interval between his operation and the generally perceptible effect of it, is no greater, less indeed, than in many other departments of the great human effort. The "E pur si muove" of the astronomer was as bitter a word as any uttered before or since by a poet over his rejected living work, in that depth of conviction which is so like despair.

But in this respect was the experience of Shelley peculiarly unfortunate—that the disbelief in him as a man, even preceded the disbelief in him as a writer; the misconstruction of his moral nature preparing the

way for the misappreciation of his intellectual labours. There existed from the beginning, —simultaneous with, indeed anterior to his earliest noticeable works, and not brought forward to counteract any impression they had succeeded in making,—certain charges against his private character and life, which, if substantiated to their whole breadth, would materially disturb, I do not attempt to deny, our reception and enjoyment of his works, however wonderful the artistic qualities of these. For we are not sufficiently supplied with instances of genius of his order, to be able to pronounce certainly how many of its constituent parts have been tasked and strained to the production of a given lie, and how high and pure a mood of the creative mind may be dramatically simulated as the poet's habitual and exclusive one. The doubts, therefore, arising from such a question, required to be set at rest, as they were effectually, by those early authentic notices of Shelley's career and the corroborative accompaniment of his letters, in which not only the main tenor and principal result of his life, but the purity and beauty of many of the processes which had

conduced to them, were made apparent enough for the general reader's purpose,—whoever lightly condemned Shelley first, on the evidence of reviews and gossip, as lightly acquitting him now, on that of memoirs and correspondence. Still, it is advisable to lose no opportunity of strenghtening and completing the chain of biographical testimony; much more, of course, for the sake of the poet's original lovers, whose volunteered sacrifice of particular principle in favour of absorbing sympathy we might desire to dispense with, than for the sake of his foolish haters, who have long since diverted upon other objects their obtuseness or malignancy. A full life of Shelley should be written at once, while the materials for it continue in reach; not to minister to the curiosity of the public, but to obliterate the last stain of that false life which was forced on the public's attention before it had any curiosity on the matter,—a biography, composed in harmony with the present general disposition to have faith in him, yet not shrinking from a candid statement of all ambiguous passages, through a reasonable confidence that the most doubtful of them will be found consistent with

a belief in the eventual perfection of his character, according to the poor limits of our humanity. Nor will men persist in confounding, any more than God confounds, with genuine infidelity and an atheism of the heart, those passionate, impatient struggles of a boy towards distant truth and love, made in the dark, and ended by one sweep of the natural seas before the full moral sunrise could shine out on him. Crude convictions of boyhood, conveyed in imperfect and inapt forms of speech,—for such things all boys have been pardoned. There are growing-pains, accompanied by temporary distortion, of the soul also. And it would be hard indeed upon this young Titan of genius, murmuring in divine music his human ignorances, through his very thirst for knowledge, and his rebellion, in mere aspiration to law, if the melody itself substantiated the error, and the tragic cutting short of life perpetuated into sins, such faults as, under happier circumstances, would have been left behind by the consent of the most arrogant moralist, forgotten on the lowest steps of youth.

The responsibility of presenting to the public a biography of Shelley, does not,

however, lie with me: I have only to make it a little easier by arranging these few supplementary letters, with a recognition of the value of the whole collection. This value I take to consist in a most truthful conformity of the Correspondence, in its limited degree, with the moral and intellectual character of the writer as displayed in the highest manifestations of his genius. Letters and poems are obviously an act of the same mind, produced by the same law, only differing in the application to the individual or collective understanding. Letters and poems may be used indifferently as the basement of our opinion upon the writer's character; the finished expression of a sentiment in the poems, giving light and significance to the rudiments of the same in the letters, and these, again, in their incipiency and unripeness, authenticating the exalted mood and reattaching it to the personality of the writer. The musician speaks on the note he sings with; there is no change in the scale, as he diminishes the volume into familiar intercourse. There is nothing of that jarring between the man and the author, which has been found so amusing or so melancholy; no dropping

of the tragic mask, as the crowd melts away; no mean discovery of the real motives of a life's achievement, often, in other lives, laid bare as pitifully as when, at the close of a holiday, we catch sight of the internal lead-pipes and wood-valves, to which, and not to the ostensible conch and dominant Triton of the fountain, we have owed our admired waterwork. No breaking out, in household privacy, of hatred, anger and scorn, incongruous with the higher mood and suppressed artistically in the book: no brutal return to self-delighting, when the audience of philanthropic schemes is out of hearing: no indecent stripping off the grander feeling and rule of life as too costly and cumbrous for every-day wear. Whatever Shelley was, he was with an admirable sincerity. It was not always truth that he thought and spoke; but in the purity of truth he spoke and thought always. Everywhere is apparent his belief in the existence of Good, to which Evil is an accident; his faithful holding by what he assumed to be the former, going everywhere in company with the tenderest pity for those acting or suffering on the opposite hypothesis. For he was tender,

though tenderness is not always the characteristic of very sincere natures; he was eminently both tender and sincere. And not only do the same affection and yearning after the well-being of his kind, appear in the letters as in the poems, but they express themselves by the same theories and plans, however crude and unsound. There is no reservation of a subtler, less costly, more serviceable remedy for his own ill, then he has proposed for the general one; nor does he ever contemplate an object on his own account, from a less elevation than he uses in exhibiting it to the world. How shall we help believing Shelley to have been, in his ultimate attainment, the splendid spirit of his own best poetry, when we find even his carnal speech to agree faithfully, at faintest as at strongest, with the tone and rhythm of his most oracular utterances?

For the rest, these new letters are not offered as presenting any new feature of the poet's character. Regarded in themselves, and as the substantive productions of a man, their importance would be slight. But they possess interest beyond their limits, in confirming the evidence just dwelt on, of

the poetical mood of Shelley being only the intensification of his habitual mood; the same tongue only speaking, for want of the special excitement to sing. The very first letter, as one instance for all, strikes the key-note of the predominating sentiment of Shelley throughout his whole life—his sympathy with the oppressed. And when we see him at so early an age, casting out, under the influence of such a sympathy, letters and pamphlets on every side, we accept it as the simple exemplification of the sincerity, with which, at the close of his life, he spoke of himself, as—

"One whose heart a stranger's tear might wear
As water-drops the sandy fountain stone;
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glass of phantasy,
And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep—
One who was as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth."

Such sympathy with his kind was evidently developed in him to an extraordinary and even morbid degree, at a period when the general intellectual powers it was impatient to put in motion, were immature or deficient.

I conjecture, from a review of the various publications of Shelley's youth, that one of the causes of his failure at the outset, was the peculiar *practicalness* of his mind, which was not without a determinate effect on his progress in theorising. An ordinary youth, who turns his attention to similar subjects, discovers falsities, incongruities, and various points for amendment, and, in the natural advance of the purely critical spirit unchecked by considerations of remedy, keeps up before his young eyes so many instances of the same error and wrong, that he finds himself unawares arrived at the startling conclusion, that all must be changed—or nothing: in the face of which plainly impossible achievement, he is apt (looking perhaps a little more serious by the time he touches at the decisive issue), to feel, either carelessly or considerately, that his own attempting a single piece of service would be worse than useless even, and to refer the whole task to another age and person—safe in proportion to his incapacity. Wanting words to speak, he has never made a fool of himself by speaking. But, in Shelley's case, the early fervour and power to *see,* was accompanied by as preco-

cious a fertility to *contrive:* he endeavoured to realise as he went on idealising; every wrong had simultaneously its remedy, and, out of the strength of his hatred for the former, he took the strength of his confidence in the latter—till suddenly he stood pledged to the defence of a set of miserable little expedients, just as if they represented great principles, and to an attack upon various great principles, really so, without leaving himself time to examine whether, because they were antagonistical to the remedy he had suggested, they must therefore be identical or even essentially connected with the wrong he sought to cure,—playing with blind passion into the hands of his enemies, and dashing at whatever red cloak was held forth to him, as the cause of the fireball he had last been stung with—mistaking Churchdom for Christianity, and for marriage, "the sale of love" and the law of sexual oppression.

Gradually, however, he was leaving behind him this low practical dexterity, unable to keep up with his widening intellectual perception; and, in exact proportion as he did so, his true power strengthened and proved

itself. Gradually he was raised above the contemplation of spots and the attempt at effacing them, to the great Abstract Light, and, through the discrepancy of the creation, to the sufficiency of the First Cause. Gradually he was learning that the best way of removing abuses is to stand fast by truth. Truth is one, as they are manifold; and innumerable negative effects are produced by the upholding of one positive principle. I shall say what I think,—had Shelley lived he would have finally ranged himself with the Christians; his very instinct for helping the weaker side (if numbers make strength), his very "hate of hate," which at first mistranslated itself into delirious Queen Mab notes and the like, would have got clearer-sighted by exercise. The preliminary step to following Christ, is the leaving the dead to bury their dead—not clamouring on His doctrine for an especial solution of difficulties which are referable to the general problem of the universe. Already he had attained to a profession of "a worship to the Spirit of good within, which requires (before it sends that inspiration forth, which impresses its likeness upon all it creates) devoted and

disinterested homage," *as Coleridge says,*—and Paul likewise. And we find in one of his last exquisite fragments, avowedly a record of one of his own mornings and its experience, as it dawned on him at his soul and body's best in his boat on the Sericho—that as surely as

"The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there—
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above, and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow—
Day had awakened all things that be;"

just so surely, he tells us (stepping forward from this delicious dance-music, choragus-like, into the grander measure befitting the final enunciation),

"All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to His ends and not our own;
The million rose to learn, and One to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known."

No more difference than this, from David's pregnant conclusion so long ago!

Meantime, as I call Shelley a moral man, because he was true, simple-hearted, and brave, and because what he acted corresponded to what he knew, so I call him a

man of religious mind, because every audacious negative cast up by him against the Divine, was interpenetrated with a mood of reverence and adoration,—and because I find him everywhere taking for granted some of the capital dogmas of Christianity, while most vehemently denying their historical basement. There is such a thing as an efficacious knowledge of and belief in the politics of Junius, or the poetry of Rowley, though a man should at the same time dispute the title of Chatterton to the one, and consider the author of the other, as Byron wittily did, "really, truly, nobody at all."[1] There is even such a thing, we come to learn

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1 Or, to take our illustrations from the writings of Shelley himself, there is such a thing as admirably appreciating a work by Andrea Verocchio,—and fancifully characterising the Pisan Torre Guelfa by the Ponte a Mare, black against the sunsets,—and consummately painting the islet of San Clemente with its penitentiary for rebellious priests, to the west between Venice and the Lido—while you believe the first to be a fragment of an antique sarcophagus,—the second, Ugolino's Tower of Famine (the vestiges of which should be sought for in the Piazza de' Cavalieri)—and the third (as I convinced myself last summer at Venice), San Servola with its madhouse—which, far from being "windowless," is as full of windows as a barrack.

wonderingly in these very letters, as a profound sensibility and adaptitude for art, while the science of the percipient is so little advanced as to admit of his stronger admiration for Guido (and Carlo Dolce!) than for Michael Angelo. A Divine Being has Himself said, that "a word against the Son of man shall be forgiven to a man," while "a word against the Spirit of God" (implying a general deliberate preference of perceived evid to perceived good) "shall not be forgiven to a man." Also, in religion, one earnest and unextorted assertion of belief should outweigh, as a matter of testimony, many assertions of unbelief. The fact that there is a gold-region is established by the finding of one lump, though you miss the vein never so often.

He died before his youth ended. In taking the measure of him as a man, he must be considered on the whole and at his ultimate spiritual stature, and not be judged of at the immaturity and by the mistakes of ten years before: that, indeed, would be to judge of the author of "Julian and Maddalo" by "Zastrozzi." Let the whole truth be told of his worst mistake. I believe, for my own

part, that if anything could now shame or grieve Shelley, it would be an attempt to vindicate him at the expense of another.

In forming a judgment, I would, however, press on the reader the simple justice of considering tenderly his constitution of body as well as mind, and how unfavourable it was to the steady symmetries of conventional life; the body, in the torture of incurable disease, refusing to give repose to the bewildered soul, tossing in its hot fever of the fancy,—and the laudanum-bottle making but a perilous and pitiful truce between these two. He was constantly subject to "that state of mind" (I quote his own note to "Hellas") "in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensation, through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and excess of passion animating the creations of the imagination:" in other words, he was liable to remarkable delusions and hallucinations. The nocturnal attack in Wales, for instance, was assuredly a delusion; and I venture to express my own conviction, derived from a little attention to the circumstances of either story, that the idea of the enamoured lady following him to Naples,

and of the "man in the cloak" who struck him at the Pisan post-office, were equally illusory,—the mere projection, in fact, from himself, of the image of his own love and hate.

"To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
When busy thought and blind sensation mingle,—
To nurse the image of *unfelt caresses*
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow"—

of unfelt caresses,—and of unfelt blows as well: to such conditions was his genius subject. It was not at Rome only (where he heard a mystic voice exclaiming, "Cenci, Cenci," in reference to the tragic theme which occupied him at the time),—it was not at Rome only that he mistook the cry of "old rags." The habit of somnambulism is said to have extended to the very last days of his life.

Let me conclude with a thought of Shelley as a poet. In the hierarchy of creative minds, it is the presence of the highest faculty that gives first rank, in virtue of its kind, not degree; no pretension of a lower nature, whatever the completeness of devel-

opment or variety of effect, impeding the precedency of the rarer endowment though only in the germ. The contrary is sometimes maintained; it is attempted to make the lower gifts (which are potentially included in the higher faculty) of independent value, and equal to some exercise of the special function. For instance, should not a poet possess common sense? Then the possession of abundant common sense implies a step towards becoming a poet. Yes; such a step as the lapidary's, when, strong in the fact of carbon entering largely into the composition of the diamond, he heaps up a sack of charcoal in order to compete with the Koh-i-noor. I pass at once, therefore, from Shelley's minor excellences to his noblest and predominating characteristic.

This I call his simultaneous perception of Power and Love in the absolute, and of Beauty and Good in the concrete, while he throws, from his poet's station between both, swifter, subtler, and more numerous films for the connexion of each with each, than have been thrown by any modern artificer of whom I have knowledge; proving how, as he says,

> "The spirit of the worm within the sod,
> In love and worship blends itself with God."

I would rather consider Shelley's poetry as a sublime fragmentary essay towards a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity, of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal, than I would isolate and separately appraise the worth of many detachable portions which might be acknowledged as utterly perfect in a lower moral point of view, under the mere conditions of art. It would be easy to take my stand on successful instances of objectivity in Shelley: there is the unrivalled "Cenci;" there is the "Julian and Maddalo" too; there is the magnificent "Ode to Naples:" why not regard, it may be said, the less organised matter as the radiant elemental foam and solution, out of which would have been evolved, eventually, creations as perfect even as those? But I prefer to look for the highest attainment, not simply the high,—and, seeing it, I hold by it. There is surely enough of the work "Shelley" to be known enduringly among men, and, I believe, to be accepted of God, as human work may; and around the imper-

fect proportions of such, the most elaborated productions of ordinary art must arrange themselves as inferior illustrations.

It is because I have long held these opinions in assurance and gratitude, that I catch at the opportunity offered to me of expressing them here; knowing that the alacrity to fulfil an humble office conveys more love than the acceptance of the honour of a higher one, and that better, therefore, than the signal service it was the dream of my boyhood to render to his fame and memory, may be the saying of a few inadequate words upon these scarcely more important supplementary letters of SHELLEY.

PARIS, *Dec. 4th*, 1851.

The Bibelot

"THE *prose tales . . . were written very swiftly, poured out, as it were, from a brain overloaded and saturated with its pent-up stores of imagination. . . . Put him in the thirteenth century and he is completely and conspicuously at his ease; the pictures rise, the narrative flows, as though he had seen and heard all he describes. . . . On the imaginative side he was far behind, and far before, his own time; he belongs partly to the earlier Middle Ages, and partly to an age still far in the future. The stories of 'The Unknown Church' and 'Lindenborg Pool' have what may be called a semi-historical setting; they are placed, that is, in a definite European country and in a more or less definite epoch. . . . The tale of 'Lindenborg Pool' is indeed suggested by a story in Thorpe's 'Northern Mythology;'"*[1] *and this as observed by Mr. Aymer Vallance,*[2] *"should not fail to be*

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1 *See J. W. Mackail* (The Life of William Morris, *1899. Vol. I, pp. 97-98*).

2 *See* William Morris; His Art, His Writings, and His Public Life. *By Aymer Vallance. (London, Royal 8vo. 1898.) P. 23.*

noted as the earliest reference to its author's being attached to a branch of study—Norse folk-lore and language to wit—the knowledge of which he has done so much to extend amongst us that he may be said to have imparted additional distinction to the older literature, and to have given it a fresh lease of life that shall endure, coupled henceforward with his own illustrious name, as long as the English tongue is spoken."

THE STORY OF THE UNKNOWN CHURCH
By
WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE STORY OF THE UNKNOWN CHURCH.

I WAS the master-mason of a church that was built more than six hundred years ago; it is now two hundred years since that church vanished from the face of the earth; it was destroyed utterly,—no fragment of it was left; not even the great pillars that bore up the tower at the cross, where the choir used to join the nave. No one knows now even where it stood, only in this very autumn-tide, if you knew the place, you would see the heaps made by the earth-covered ruins heaving the yellow corn into glorious waves, so that the place where my church used to be is as beautiful now as when it stood in all its splendour. I do not remember very much about the land where my church was; I have quite forgotten the name of it, but I know it was very beautiful, and even now, while I am thinking of it, comes a flood of old memories, and I almost seem to see it again,—that old beautiful land! only dimly do I see it in spring and summer and winter, but I see it in autumn-tide clearly now; yes, clearer, clearer, oh! so bright and glorious! yet it was beautiful too in spring, when the brown

earth began to grow green: beautiful in summer, when the blue sky looked so much bluer, if you could hem a piece of it in between the new white carving; beautiful in the solemn starry nights, so solemn that it almost reached agony—the awe and joy one had in their great beauty. But of all these beautiful times, I remember the whole only of autumn-tide; the others come in bits to me; I can think only of parts of them, but all of autumn; and of all days and nights in autumn, I remember one more particularly. That autumn day the church was nearly finished, and the monks, for whom we were building the church, and the people, who lived in the town hard by, crowded round us oftentimes to watch us carving.

Now the great Church, and the buildings of the Abbey where the monks lived, were about three miles from the town, and the town stood on a hill overlooking the rich autumn country: it was girt about with great walls that had overhanging battlements, and towers at certain places all along the walls, and often we could see from the churchyard or the Abbey garden, the flash of helmets and spears, and the dim shadowy waving of

banners, as the knights and lords and men-at-arms passed to and fro along the battlements; and we could see too in the town the three spires of the three churches; and the spire of the Cathedral, which was the tallest of the three, was gilt all over with gold, and always at night-time a great lamp shone from it that hung in the spire midway between the roof of the church and the cross at the top of the spire. The Abbey where we built the Church was not girt by stone walls, but by a circle of poplar trees, and whenever a wind passed over them, were it ever so little a breath, it set them all a-ripple; and when the wind was high, they bowed and swayed very low, and the wind, as it lifted the leaves, and showed their silvery white sides, or as again in the lulls of it, it let them drop, kept on changing the trees from green to white, and white to green; moreover, through the boughs and trunks of the poplars, we caught glimpses of the great golden corn sea, waving, waving, waving for leagues and leagues; and among the corn grew burning scarlet poppies, and blue corn-flowers; and the corn-flowers were so blue, that they gleamed, and seemed to burn with a steady light, as they grew beside

the poppies among the gold of the wheat. Through the corn sea ran a blue river, and always green meadows and lines of tall poplars followed its windings. The old Church had been burned, and that was the reason why the monks caused me to build the new one; the buildings of the Abbey were built at the same time as the burned-down Church, more than a hundred years before I was born, and they were on the north side of the Church, and joined to it by a cloister of round arches, and in the midst of the cloister was a lawn, and in the midst of that lawn, a fountain of marble, carved round about with flowers and strange beasts; and at the edge of the lawn, near the round arches, were a great many sun-flowers that were all in blossom on that autumn day; and up many of the pillars of the cloister crept passion-flowers and roses. Then farther from the Church, and past the cloister and its buildings, were many detached buildings, and a great garden round them, all within the circle of the poplar trees; in the garden were trellises covered over with roses, and convolvulus, and the great-leaved fiery nasturtium; and specially all along by the poplar trees were there

trellises, but on these grew nothing but deep crimson roses; the hollyhocks too were all out in blossom at that time, great spires of pink, and orange, and red, and white, with their soft, downy leaves. I said that nothing grew on the trellises by the poplars but crimson roses, but I was not quite right, for in many places the wild flowers had crept into the garden from without; lush green briony, with green-white blossoms, that grows so fast, one could almost think that we see it grow, and deadly nightshade, La bella donna, O! so beautiful; red berry, and purple, yellow-spiked flower, and deadly, cruel-looking, dark green leaf, all growing together in the glorious days of early autumn. And in the midst of the great garden was a conduit, with its sides carved with histories from the Bible, and there was on it too, as on the fountain in the cloister, much carving of flowers and strange beasts. Now the Church itself was surrounded on every side but the north by the cemetery, and there were many graves there, both of monks and of laymen, and often the friends of those, whose bodies lay there, had planted flowers about the graves of those they loved. I remember one

such particularly, for at the head of it was a cross of carved wood, and at the foot of it, facing the cross, three tall sun-flowers; then in the midst of the cemetery was a cross of stone, carved on one side with the Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on the other with Our Lady holding the Divine Child. So that day, that I specially remember, in autumn-tide, when the church was nearly finished, I was carving in the central porch of the west front; (for I carved all those bas-reliefs in the west front with my own hand;) beneath me my sister Margaret was carving at the flower-work, and the little quatrefoils that carry the signs of the zodiac and emblems of the months: now my sister Margaret was rather more than twenty years old at that time, and she was very beautiful, with dark brown hair and deep calm violet eyes. I had lived with her all my life, lived with her almost alone latterly, for our father and mother died when she was quite young, and I loved her very much, though I was not thinking of her just then, as she stood beneath me carving. Now the central porch was carved with a bas-relief of the Last Judgment, and it was divided into three parts

by horizontal bans of deep flower-work. In the lowest division, just over the doors, was carved The Rising of the Dead; above were angels blowing long trumpets, and Michael the Archangel weighing the souls, and the blessed led into heaven by angels, and the lost into hell by the devil; and in the topmost division was the Judge of the world.

All the figures in the porch were finished except one, and I remember when I woke that morning my exultation at the thought of my Church being so nearly finished; I remember, too, how a kind of misgiving mingled with the exultation, which, try all I could, I was unable to shake off; I thought then it was a rebuke for my pride, well, perhaps it was. The figure I had to carve was Abraham, sitting with a blossoming three on each side of him, holding in his two hands the corners of his great robe, so that it made a mighty fold, wherein, with their hands crossed over their breasts, were the souls of the faithful, of whom he was called Father: I stood on the scaffolding for some time, while Margaret's chisel worked on bravely down below. I took mine in my hand, and stood so, listening to the noise of the masons

inside, and two monks of the Abbey came and stood below me, and a knight, holding his little daughter by the hand, who every now and then looked up at him, and asked him strange questions. I did not think of these long, but began to think of Abraham, yet I could not think of him sitting there, quiet and solemn, while the Judgment-Trumpet was being blown; I rather thought of him as he looked when he chased those kings so far; riding far ahead of any of his company, with his mail-hood off his head, and lying in grim folds down his back, with the strong west wind blowing his wild black hair far out behind him, with the wind rippling the long scarlet pennon of his lance; riding there amid the rocks and the sands alone; with the last gleam of the armour of the beaten kings disappearing behind the winding of the pass; with his company a long, long way behind, quite out of sight, though their trumpets sounded faintly among the clefts of the rocks; and so I thought I saw him, till in his fierce chase he leapt, horse and man, into a deep river, quiet, swift, and smooth; and there was something in the moving of the water-lilies as the breast of

the horse swept them aside, that suddenly took away the thought of Abraham and brought a strange dream of lands I had never seen; and the first was of a place where I was quite alone, standing by the side of a river, and there was the sound of singing a very long way off, but no living thing of any kind could be seen, and the land was quite flat, quite without hills, and quite without trees too, and the river wound very much, making all kinds of quaint curves, and on the side where I stood there grew nothing but long grass, but on the other side grew, quite on to the horizon, a great sea of red corn-poppies, only paths of white lilies wound all among them, with here and there a great golden sun-flower. So I looked down at the river by my feet, and saw how blue it was, and how, as the stream went swiftly by, it swayed to and fro the long green weeds, and I stood and looked at the river for long, till at last I felt some one touch me on the shoulder, and, looking round, I saw standing by me my friend Amyot, whom I love better than any one else in the world, but I thought in my dream that I was frightened when I saw him, for his face had changed so, it was

so bright and almost transparent, and his eyes gleamed and shone as I had never seen them do before. Oh! he was so wondrously beautiful, so fearfully beautiful! and as I looked at him the distant music swelled, and seemed to come close up to me, and then swept by us, and fainted away, at last died off entirely; and then I felt sick at heart, and faint, and parched, and I stooped to drink of the water of the river, and as soon as the water touched my lips, lo! the river vanished and the flat country with its poppies and lilies, and I dreamed that I was in a boat by myself again, floating in an almost land-locked bay of the northern sea, under a cliff of dark basalt. I was lying on my back in the boat, looking up at the intensely blue sky, and a long low swell from the outer sea lifted the boat up and let it fall again and carried it gradually nearer and nearer towards the dark cliff; and as I moved on, I saw at last, on the top of the cliff, a castle, with many towers, and on the highest tower of the castle there was a great white banner floating, with a red chevron on it, and three golden stars on the chevron; presently I saw too on one of the towers, growing in a cranny of the worn

stones, a great bunch of golden and blood-red wall-flowers, and I watched the wall-flowers and banner for long; when suddenly I heard a trumpet blow from the castle, and saw a rush of armed men on to the battlements, and there was a fierce fight, till at last it was ended, and one went to the banner and pulled it down, and cast it over the cliff into the sea, and it came down in long sweeps, with the wind making little ripples in it;—slowly, slowly it came, till at last it fell over me and covered me from my feet till over my breast, and I let it stay there and looked again at the castle, and then I saw that there was an amber-coloured banner floating over the castle in place of the red chevron, and it was much larger than the other: also now, a man stood on the battlements, looking towards me; he had a tilting helmet on, with the visor down, and an amber-coloured surcoat over his armour: his right hand was ungauntletted, and he held it high above his head, and in his hand was the bunch of wall-flowers that I had seen growing on the wall; and his hand was white and small, like a woman's, for in my dream I could see even very far-off things much clearer than we see real material

things on the earth: presently he threw the wall-flowers over the cliff, and they fell in the boat just behind my head, and then I saw, looking down from the battlements of the castle, Amyot. He looked down towards me very sorrowfully, I thought, but, even as in the other dream, said nothing; so I thought in my dream that I wept for very pity, and for love of him, for he looked as a man just risen from a long illness, and who will carry till he dies a dull pain about with him. He was very thin and his long black hair drooped all about his face, as he leaned over the battlements looking at me: he was quite pale, and his cheeks were hollow, but his eyes large, and soft, and sad. So I reached out my arms to him, and suddenly I was walking with him in a lovely garden, and we said nothing, for the music which I had heard at first was sounding close to us now, and there were many birds in the boughs of the trees: oh, such birds! gold and ruby, and emerald, but they sung not at all, but were quite silent, as though they too were listening to the music. Now all this time Amyot and I had been looking at each other, but just then I turned my head away from him, and

soon as I did so, the music ended with a long wail, and when I turned again Amyot was gone; then I felt even more sad and sick at heart than I had before when I was by the river, and I leaned against a tree, and put my hands before my eyes. When I looked again the garden was gone, and, I knew not where I was, and presently all my dreams were gone. The chips were flying bravely from the stone under my chisel at last, and all my thoughts now were in my carving, when I heard my name, "Walter," called, and when I looked down I saw one standing below me, whom I had seen in my dreams just before—Amyot. I had no hopes of seeing him for a long time, perhaps I might never see him again, I thought, for he was away (as I thought) fighting in the holy wars, and it made me almost beside myself to see him standing close by me in the flesh. I got down from my scaffolding as soon as I could, and all thoughts else were soon drowned in the joy of having him by me; Margaret, too, how glad she must have been, for she had been betrothed to him for some time before he went to the wars, and he had been five years away; five years! and how we had

thought of him through those many weary days! how often his face had come before me! his brave, honest face, the most beautiful among all the faces of men and women I have ever seen. Yes, I remember how five years ago I held his hand as we came together out of the cathedral of that great, far-off city, whose name I forget now; and then I remember the stamping of the horses' feet; I remember how his hand left mine at last, and then, some one looking back at me earnestly as they all rode on together—looking back, with his hand on the saddle behind him, while the trumpets sang in long solemn peals as they all rode on together, with the glimmer of arms and the fluttering of banners, and the clinking of the rings of the mail, that sounded like the falling of many drops of water into the deep, still waters of some pool that the rocks nearly meet over; and the gleam and flash of the swords, and the glimmer of the lance-heads and the flutter of the rippled banners, that streamed out from them, swept past me, and were gone, and they seemed like a pageant in a dream, whose meaning we know not; and those sounds too, the trumpets, and the

clink of the mail, and the thunder of the horse-hoofs, they seemed dream-like too—and it was all like a dream that he should leave me, for we had said that we should always be together; but he went away, and now he is come back again.

We were by his bed-side, Margaret and I; I stood and leaned over him, and my hair fell sideways over my face and touched his face; Margaret kneeled beside me, quivering in every limb, not with pain, I think, but rather shaken by a passion of earnest prayer. After some time (I know not how long), I looked up from his face to the window underneath which he lay; I do not know what time of the day it was, but I know that it was a glorious autumn day, a day soft with melting, golden haze: a vine and a rose grew together, and trailed half across the window, so that I could not see much of the beautiful blue sky, and nothing of town or country beyond; the vine leaves were touched with red here and there, and three over-blown roses, light pink roses, hung amongst them. I remember dwelling on the strange lines the autumn had made in red on one of the goldgreen vine leaves, and watch-

ing one leaf of one of the over-blown roses, expecting it to fall every minute; but as I gazed, and felt disappointed that the rose leaf had not fallen yet, I felt my pain suddenly shoot through me, and I remembered what I had lost; and then came bitter, bitter dreams, — dreams which had once made me happy, — dreams of the things I had hoped would be, of the things that would never be now; they came between the fair vine leaves and rose blossoms, and that which lay before the window; they came as before, perfect in colour and form, sweet sounds and shapes. But now in every one was something unutterably miserable; they would not go away, they put out the steady glow of the golden haze, the sweet light of the sun through the vine leaves, the soft leaning of the full blown roses. I wandered in them for a long time; at last I felt a hand put me aside gently, for I was standing at the head of — of the bed; then some one kissed my forehead, and words were spoken — I know not what words. The bitter dreams left me for the bitter reality at last; for I had found him that morning lying dead, only the morning after I had seen him when he had come back from

his long absence — I had found him lying dead, with his hands crossed downwards, with his eyes closed, as though the angels had done that for him; and now when I looked at him he still lay there, and Margaret knelt by him with her face touching his: she was not quivering now, her lips moved not at all as they had done just before; and so, suddenly those words came to my mind which she had spoken when she kissed me, and which at the time I had only heard with my outward hearing, for she had said, "Walter, farewell, and Christ keep you; but for me, I must be with him, for so I promised him last night that I would never leave him any more, and God will let me go." And verily Margaret and Amyot did go, and left me very lonely and sad.

It was just beneath the westernmost arch of the nave, there I carved their tomb: I was a long time carving it; I did not think I should be so long at first, and I said, "I shall die when I have finished carving it," thinking that would be a very short time. But so it happened after I had carved those two whom I loved, lying with clasped hands like husband and wife above their tomb, that

I could not yet leave carving it; and so that I might be near them I became a monk, and used to sit in the choir and sing, thinking of the time when we should all be together again. And as I had time I used to go to the westernmost arch of the nave and work at the tomb that was there under the great, sweeping arch; and in process of time I raised a marble canopy that reached quite up to the top of the arch, and I painted it too as fair as I could, and carved it all about with many flowers and histories, and in them I carved the faces of those I had known on earth (for I was not as one on earth now, but seemed quite away out of the world). And as I carved, sometimes the monks and other people too would come and gaze, and watch how the flowers grew; and sometimes too as they gazed, they would weep for pity, knowing how all had been. So my life passed, and I lived in that Abbey for twenty years after he died, till one morning, quite early, when they came into the church for matins, they found me lying dead, with my chisel in my hand, underneath the last lily of the tomb.

LINDENBORG POOL.

LINDENBORG POOL.[1]

I READ once in lazy humour Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," on a cold May night when the north wind was blowing; in lazy humour, but when I came to the tale that is here amplified there was something in it that fixed my attention and made me think of it; and whether I would or no, my thoughts ran in this way, as here follows.

So I felt obliged to write, and wrote accordingly, and by the time I had done the grey light filled all my room; so I put out my candles, and went to bed, not without fear and trembling, for the morning twilight is so strange and lonely. This is what I wrote.

Yes, on that dark night, with that wild unsteady north wind howling, though it was Maytime, it was doubtless dismal enough in the forest, where the boughs clashed eerily, and where, as the wanderer in that place hurried along, strange forms half showed themselves to him, the more fearful because half seen in that way: dismal enough doubt-

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1 See Thorpe's "Northern Mythology," vol. II, p. 214.

less on wide moors where the great wind had it all its own way: dismal on the rivers creeping on and on between the marshlands, creeping through the willows, the water trickling through the locks, sounding faintly in the gusts of the wind.

Yet surely nowhere so dismal as by the side of that still pool.

I threw myself down on the ground there, utterly exhausted with my struggle against the wind, and with bearing the fathoms and fathoms of the heavily-leaded plumb-line that lay beside me.

Fierce as the rain was, it could not raise the leaden waters of that fearful pool, defended as they were by the steep banks of dripping yellow clay, striped horribly here and there with ghastly uncertain green and blue.

They said no man could fathom it; and yet all round the edges of it grew a rank crop of dreary reeds and segs, some round, some flat, but none ever flowering as other things flowered, never dying and being renewed, but always the same stiff array of unbroken reeds and segs, some round, some flat. Hard by me were two trees leafless and ugly, made, it seemed, only for

the wind to go through with a wild sough on such nights as these; and for a mile from that place were no other trees.

True, I could not see all this at that time, then, in the dark night, but I knew well that it was all there; for much had I studied this pool in the day-time, trying to learn the secret of it; many hours I had spent there, happy with a kind of happiness, because forgetful of the past. And even now, could I not hear the wind going through those trees, as it never went through any trees before or since? could I not see gleams of the dismal moor? could I not hear those reeds just taken by the wind, knocking against each other, the flat ones scraping all along the round ones? Could I not hear, moreover, the slow trickling of the land-springs through the clay banks?

The cold, chill horror of the place was too much for me; I had never been there by night before, nobody had for quite a long time, and now to come on such a night! If there had been any moon, the place would have looked more as it did by day; besides, the moon shining on water is always so beautiful, on any water even: if it had been

starlight, one could have looked at the stars and thought of the time when those fields were fertile and beautiful (for such a time was, I am sure), when the cowslips grew among the grass, and when there was promise of yellow-waving corn stained with poppies; that time which the stars had seen, but which we had never seen, which even they would never see again — past time!

Ah! what was that which touched my shoulder? — Yes, I see, only a dead leaf. — Yes, to be here on this eighth of May too of all nights in the year, the night of that awful day when ten years ago I slew him, not undeservedly, God knows, yet how dreadful it was! — Another leaf! and another! — Strange, those trees have been dead this hundred years, I should think. How sharp the wind is too, just as if I were moving along and meeting it; — why, I *am* moving! what then, I am not there after all; where am I then? there are the trees; no, they are freshly-planted oak saplings, the very ones that those withered last-year's leaves were blown on me from.

I have been dreaming then, and am on my road to the lake: but what a young wood!

I must have lost my way; I never saw all this before. Well — I will walk on stoutly.

May the Lord help my senses! I am *riding!* — on a mule; a bell tinkles somewhere on him; the wind blows something about with a flapping sound: something? in heaven's name, what? *My* long black robes. — Why — when I left my house I was clad in serviceable broadcloth of the nineteenth century.

I shall go mad — I am mad — I am gone to the devil — I have lost my identity; who knows in what place, in what age of the world I am living now? Yet I will be calm; I have seen all these things before, in pictures surely, or something like them. I am resigned, since it is no worse than that. I am a priest then, in the dim, far-off thirteenth century, riding, about midnight I should say, to carry the blessed sacrament to some dying man.

Soon I found that I was not alone; a man was riding close to me on a horse; he was fantastically dressed, more so than usual for that time, being striped all over in vertical stripes of yellow and green, with quaint birds like exaggerated storks in different

attitudes counterchanged on the stripes; all this I saw by the lantern he carried, in the light of which his debauched black eyes quite flashed. On he went, unsteadily rolling, very drunk, though it was the thirteenth century, but being plainly used to that, he sat his horse fairly well.

I watched him in my proper nineteenth-century character, with insatiable curiosity and intense amusement; but as a quiet priest of a long-past age, with contempt and disgust enough not unmixed with fear and anxiety.

He roared out snatches of doggerel verse as he went along, drinking songs, hunting songs, robbing songs, lust-songs, in a voice that sounded far and far above the roaring of the wind, though that was high, and rolled along the dark road that his lantern cast spikes of light along ever so far, making the devils grin: and meanwhile I, the priest, glanced from him wrathfully every now and then to That which I carried very reverently in my hand, and my blood curdled with shame and indignation; but being a shrewd priest, I knew well enough that a sermon would be utterly thrown away on a man who was drunk every day in the year, and, more

especially, very drunk then. So I held my peace, saying only under my breath:

"Dixit insipiens in corde suo, Non est Deus. Corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti sunt in studiis suis; non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum: sepulchrum patens est guttur eorum; linguis suis dolose agebant, venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum. Dominum non invocaverunt; illic trepidaverunt timore, ubi non erat timor. Quis dabit ex Sion salutare Israel?"

and so I went on, thinking too at times about the man who was dying and whom I was soon to see: he had been a bold bad plundering baron, but was said lately to have altered his way of life, having seen a miracle or some such thing; he had departed to keep a tournament near his castle lately, but had been brought back sore wounded, so this drunken servant, with some difficulty and much unseasonable merriment, had made me understand, and now lay at the point of death, brought about by unskilful tending and such like. Then I thought of his face — a bad face, very bad, retreating forehead, small twinkling eyes, projecting lower jaw; and such a voice, too, he had! like the grunt of a boar mostly.

Now don't you think it strange that this face should be the same, actually the same as the face of my enemy, slain that very day ten years ago? I did not hate him, either that man or the baron, but I wanted to see as little of him as possible, and I hoped that the ceremony would soon be over, and that I should be at liberty again.

And so with these thoughts and many others, but all thought strangely double, we went along, the varlet being too drunk to take much notice of me, only once, as he was singing some doggerel, like this, I think, making allowances for change of language and so forth:

"The Duke went to Treves
  On the first of November;
His wife stay'd at Bonn—
  Let me see, I remember;

"When the Duke came back
  To look for his wife,
We came from Cologne,
  And took the Duke's life;

"We hung him high
  Between spire and pavement,
From their mouths dropp'd the cabbage
  Of the carles in amazement."

"Boo — hoo! Church-rat! Church mouse! Hilloa, Priest! have you brought the pyx, eh?"

From some cause or other he seemed to think this an excellent joke, for he almost shrieked with laughter as we went along; but by this time we had reached the castle. Challenge, and counter-challenge, and we passed the outermost gate and began to go through some of the courts, in which stood lime trees here and there, growing green tenderly with that Maytime, though the north wind bit so keenly.

How strange again! as I went farther, there seemed no doubt of it; here in the aftertime came that pool, how I knew not; but in the few moments that we were riding from the outer gate to the castle-porch I thought so intensely over the probable cause for the existence of that pool, that (how strange!) I could almost have thought I was back again listening to the oozing of the land-springs through the high clay banks there. I was wakened from that, before it grew too strong, by the glare of many torches, and, dismounting, found myself in the midst of some twenty attendants, with

flushed faces and wildly sparkling eyes, which they were vainly trying to soften to due solemnity; mock solemnity I had almost said, for they did not seem to think it necessary to appear really solemn, and had difficulty enough apparently in not prolonging indefinitely the shout of laughter with which they had at first greeted me. "Take the holy Father to my Lord," said one at last, "and we will go with him."

So they led me up the stairs into the gorgeously-furnished chamber; the light from the heavy waxen candles was pleasant to my eyes after the glare and twisted red smoke of the pine-torches; but all the essences scattered about the chamber were not enough to conquer the fiery breath of those about me.

I put on the alb and stole they brought me, and, before I went up to the sick man, looked round on those that were in the rooms; for the rooms opened one into the other by many doors, across some of which hung gorgeous tapestry; all the rooms seemed to have many people, for some stood at these doors, and some passed to and fro, swinging aside the heavy hangings; once

several people at once, seemingly quite by accident, drew aside almost all the veils from the doors, and showed an endless perspective of gorgeousness.

And at these things my heart fainted for horror. "Had not the Jews of late," thought I, the priest, "been very much in the habit of crucifying children in mockery of the Holiest, holding gorgeous feasts while they beheld the poor innocents die? these men are Atheists, you are in a trap, yet quit yourself like a man."

"Ah, sharp one," thought I, the author, "where are you at last? try to pray as a test. — Well, well, these things are strangely like devils. — O man, you have talked about bravery often, now is your time to practise it: once for all trust in God, or I fear you are lost."

Moreover it increased my horror that there was no appearance of a woman in all these rooms; and yet was there not? there, those things — I looked more intently; yes, no doubt they were women, but all dressed like men; — what a ghastly place!

"O man! do your duty," my angel said; then in spite of the bloodshot eyes of man

and woman there, in spite of their bold looks, they quailed before me.

I stepped up to the bed-side, where under the velvet coverlid lay the dying man, his small sparkling eyes only (but dulled now by coming death) showing above the swathings. I was about to kneel down by the bed-side to confess him, when one of those — things — called out (now they had just been whispering and sniggering together, but the priest in his righteous, brave scorn would not look at them; the humbled author, half fearful, half trustful, dared not): so one called out:

"Sir Priest, for three days our master has spoken no articulate word; you must pass over all particulars; ask for a sign only."

Such a strange ghastly suspicion flashed across me just then; but I choked it, and asked the dying man if he repented of his sins, and if he believed all that was necessary to salvation, and, if so, to make a sign, if he were able: the man moved a little and groaned; so I took it for a sign, as he was clearly incapable either of speaking or moving, and accordingly began the service for the administration of the sacraments; and as I began, those behind me and through all

the rooms (I know it was through all of them) began to move about, in a bewildering dance-like motion, mazy and intricate; yes, and presently music struck up through all those rooms, music and singing, lively and gay; many of the tunes I had heard before (in the nineteenth century); I could have sworn to half a dozen of the polkas.

The rooms grew fuller and fuller of people; they passed thick and fast between the rooms, and the hangings were continually rustling; one fat old man with a big belly crept under the bed where I was, and wheezed and chuckled there, laughing and talking to one who stooped down and lifted up the hangings to look at him.

Still more and more people talking and singing and laughing and twirling about, till my brain went round and round, and I scarce knew what I did; yet, somehow, I could not leave off; I dared not even look over my shoulder, fearing lest I should see something so horrible as to make me die.

So I got on with the service, and at last took the pyx, and took thereout the sacred wafer, whereupon was a deep silence through all those rooms, which troubled me, I think,

more than all which had gone before, for I knew well it did not mean reverence.

I held it up, that which I counted so holy, when lo! great laughter, echoing like thunder-claps through all the rooms, not dulled by the veiling hangings, for they were all raised up together, and, with a slow upheaval of the rich clothes among which he lay, with a sound that was half snarl, half grunt, with helpless body swathed in bedclothes, a huge *swine* that I had been shriving tore from me the Holy Thing, deeply scoring my hand as he did so with tusk and tooth, so that the red blood ran quick on to the floor.

Therewithal he rolled down on to the floor, and lay there helplessly, only able to roll to and fro, because of the swathings.

Then right madly skirled the intolerable laughter, rising to shrieks that were fearfuller than any scream of agony I ever heard; the hundreds of people through all those grand rooms danced and wheeled about me, shrieking, hemming me in with interlaced arms, the women loosing their long hair and thrusting forward their horribly-grinning unsexed faces toward me till I felt their hot breath.

Oh! how I hated them all! almost hated

all mankind for their sakes; how I longed to get right quit of all men; among whom, as it seemed, all sacredest things even were made a mock of. I looked about me fiercely, I sprang forward, and clutched a sword from the gilded belt of one of those who stood near me; with savage blows that threw the blood about the gilded walls and their hangings right over the heads of those — things — I cleared myself from them, and tore down the great stairs madly, yet could not, as in a dream, go fast enough, because of my passion.

I was out in the courtyard, among the lime trees soon, the north wind blowing freshly on my heated forehead in that dawn. The outer gate was locked and bolted; I stooped and raised a great stone and sent it at the lock with all my strength, and I was stronger than ten men then; iron and oak gave way before it, and through the ragged splinters I tore in reckless fury, like a wild horse through a hazel hedge.

And no one had pursued me. I knelt down on the dear green turf outside, and thanked God with streaming eyes for my deliverance, praying Him forgiveness for my unwilling share in that night's mockery.

Then I arose and turned to go, but even as I did so I heard a roar as if the world were coming in two, and looking toward the castle, saw, not a castle, but a great cloud of white lime-dust swaying this way and that in the gusts of the wind.

Then while the east grew bright there arose a hissing, gurgling noise, that swelled into the roar and wash of many waters, and by then the sun had risen a deep black lake lay before my feet.

And this is how I tried to fathom the Lindenborg Pool.

The Bibelot

An exquisite old world song of Youth and Love, the Pervigilium Veneris *is preserved for all time in the Latin Anthology. Variously attributed to Catullus and Apuleius; assigned to a period as early as the second and again as late as the fifth century A. D., the one thing certain is briefly told: the poem bears a very doubtful date and is of absolutely unknown authorship.*[1] *Until last year it would appear to have found but three renditions into English verse, no one of them in the metre as it came down to us. To Mr. Lawrence Hayward we are thus indebted for the first line for line translation, which should go far towards removing the reproach that American students care nothing for classical literature. In this connexion a reprint of the three preceding translations is of very decided interest, that by Thomas Parnell standing first in order of poetic merit; the entire four taken*

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1. *See* Catullus: with the Pervigilium Veneris. *Edited by S. G. Owen. Illustrated by J. R. Wegulin. Quarto, London,* MDCCCXCIII. *A prose version of the Vigil can be found in* The Poems of Catullus and Tibullus, *etc., by Walter K. Kelly (Bohn's Classical Library) pp. 100-104.*

together acting as mutual aids in bringing out the beauty of the antique original. As for the text the reading adopted by Mr. Hayward is based upon a careful comparison of existing editions; nevertheless, when every critical emendation is exhausted, it by no means follows that the last word of scholarly interpretation has been said.[2]

Like the story of Cupid and Psyche The Vigil of Venus *is a golden thing in itself. To read it is to become aware of what the world lost when Roman literature along with Roman greatness went down in the darkness of more than ten centuries,—a Twilight of the Gods which only paled and passed away*

"When song new-born put off the old world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,"

and a new dawn had risen over Renaissance Italy.

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2. *See* Latin Literature, *by J. W. Mackail, New York, (Scribner's) 1895. Pp. 243-246.*

The Pervigilium Veneris.

(With Four Translations.)

Pervigilium Veneris,		A. D. 250—300.
I. Stanley's	Translation,	A. D. 1651.
II. Parnell's	"	A. D. 1720.
III. Prowett's	"	A. D. 1843.
IV. Hayward's	"	A. D. 1901.

"In one of the most remarkable of his lyrics (like this poem, a song of spring), Tennyson has come very near, as near perhaps as it is possible to do in words, towards explaining the actual process through which poetry comes into existence: *The fairy fancies range, and lightly stirr'd, Ring little bells of change from word to word.* In the *Pervigilium Veneris* with its elaborate simplicity—partly a conscious literary artifice, partly a real reversion to the childhood of poetical form—this process is, as it were, laid bare before our eyes; the ringing phrases turn and return, and expand and interlace and fold in, as though set in motion by a strain of music. . . . In the soft April night the tapering flame-shaped rosebud, soaked in warm dew, swells out and breaks into a fire of crimson at dawn. . . . Flower-garlanded and myrtle-shrouded, the Spring worshippers go dancing through the fields that break before them into a sheet of flowers; among them the boy Love goes, without his torch and his arrows; amid gold-flowered broom, under trees unloosening their tresses, in myrtle-thicket and poplar shade, the whole land sings with the voices of innumerable birds. Then with a sudden sob the pageant ceases:—

Illa cantat, nos tacemus: quando ver venit meum?
Quando fiam uti chelidon ut tacere desinam?

A second spring, in effect, was not to come for poetry till a thousand years later; once more then we hear the music of this strange poem, not now in the clear bronze utterance of a mature and magnificent language, but faintly and haltingly, in immature forms that yet have notes of new and piercing sweetness.

Bels dous amicx, fassam un joc novel
Ins el jardi on chanton li auzel—

So it rings out in Southern France, 'in an orchard under the whitehorn leaf;' and in England, later, but yet a century before Chaucer, the same clear note is echoed, *byteune Mershe ant Averil, whan spray bigineth to spring.*"

J. W. MACKAIL.

Spring

From the painting by Botticelli

Botticelli, who undoubtedly was familiar with the Virgilium Veneris (Virgil of Venus), called his picture, not Spring, but the Realm of Venus. The poem, which is of unknown authorship and is assigned to a period between the second and fifth centuries, is literally illustrated by our fifteenth century Florentine master in depicting Venus, the queen, standing in a shady grove, while Spring enters garlanded with flowers, and the white-robed Graces dance hand in hand on the grass.

§ 4 In one of the most remarkable of his lyrics (like this poem, a song of spring), Tennyson has come very near, as near perhaps as it is possible to do in words, towards explaining the actual process through which poetry comes into existence: *The fairy fancies range, and lightly sport'd. Ring little bells of change from word to word.* In the *Pervigilium Veneris* with its elaborate simplicity—partly a conscious literary artifice, partly a real reversion to the childhood of poetical form—this process is, as it were, laid bare before our eyes, the ringing phrases turn and return, and expand and interlace and fold in, as though set in motion by a strain of music. . . . In the warm April night the tapering flame of the rosebud, soaked in warm dew, smells [illegible] and [illegible] into a fire of crimson at dawn. . . . Flower-garlanded and myrtle-shrouded, the Spring [illegible] through the fields that break before them into a sea of flowers; among [illegible] the boy Love [illegible] without his torch and his arrows; amid gold-flowered broom [illegible] trees unloosening their tresses, in myrtle-thickets and poplar shade, the whole land sings with the voices of innumerable birds. [illegible] a sudden sob [illegible] pageant ceases:—

Spring

From the painting by Botticelli

Botticelli, who undoubtedly was familiar with the *Pervigilium Veneris* (*Vigil of Venus*), called his picture, not *Spring*, but the *Realm of Venus*. The poem, which is of unknown authorship and is assigned to a period between the second and fifth centuries, is literally illustrated by our fifteenth century Florentine master in depicting Venus, the queen, standing in a shady grove, while Spring enters garlanded with flowers, and the white-robed Graces dance hand in hand on the grass.

J. W. MACKAIL.

PERVIGILIUM VENERIS.

I.

CRAS *amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.*
Ver novum, ver jam canorum, ver renatus orbis est.
Vere concordant amores, vere nubunt alites,
Et nemus comam resolvit de maritis imbribus.
Cras amorum copulatrix inter umbras arborum,
Implicat casas virentes de flagello myrteo.
Cras Dione jura dicit fulta sublimi throno.

II.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Tunc cruore de superno, spumeo Pontus globo,
Cærulas inter catervas, inter et bipedes equos,
Fecit undantem Dionem de maritis imbribus.

III.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Ipsa gemmis purpurantem pingit annum floribus.
Ipsa surgentes papillas de Favoni spiritu
Urget in notos penates. Ipsa roris lucidi
Noctis aura quem relinquit, spargit humentes aquas.
En! micant lacrimæ trementes de caduco pondere;
Gutta præceps orbe parvo sustinet casus suos;
Hinc pudorem florulentæ prodiderunt purpuræ.
Humor ille quem serenis astra rorant noctibus,
Mane virgines papillas solvit humenti peplo.
Ipsa jussit mane ut udæ virgines nubant rosæ;

Facta Cypris de cruore deque Amoris osculis,
Deque gemmis deque flammis deque solis purpuris;
Cras ruborem qui latebat veste tectus ignea,
Unico marita nodo non pudebit solvere.

IV.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Ipsa nymphas Diva luco jussit ire myrteo.
It puer comes puellis. Nec tamen credi potest,
Esse Amorem feriatum, si sagittas vexerit
Ite, nymphæ; posuit arma; feriatus est Amor;
Jussus est inermis ire, nudus ire jussus est;
Neu quid acru neu sagitta neu quid igne læderet.
Sed tamen, nymphæ, cavete quod Cupido pulcher est;
Totus est in armis idem quando nudus est Amor.

V.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Compari Venus pudore mittit ad te virgines;
Una res est quam rogamus; Cede, Virgo Delia,
Ut nemus sit incruentum de ferinis stragibus.
Ipsa vellet te rogare si pudicam flecteret.
Ipsa vellet ut venires si deceret virginem.
Jam tribus choros videres feriatos noctibus,
Congreges inter catervas ire per saltus tuos,
Floreas inter coronas, myrteas inter casas.
Nec Ceres nec Bacchus absunt, nec poetarum Deus.
Detinenda tota nox est, perviglanda canticis;
Regnet in silvis Dione; tu recede, Delia.

VI.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Jussit Hyblæis tribunal stare Diva floribus.
Præses ipsa jura dicit, adsidebunt Gratiæ.
Hybla, totos funde flores quidquid annus attulit;
Hybla, florum rumpe vestem quantus Ennæ campus est.
Ruris hic erunt puellæ, vel puellæ montium,
Quæque silvas quæque lucos quæque fontes incolunt;
Jussit omnes adsidere pueri mater alitis,
Jussit et nudo puellas nil Amori credere.

VII.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Et recentibus virentes ducat umbras floribus.
Cras erit quo primus Æther copulavit nuptias.
Ut pater totis crearet vernus annum nubibus,
In sinum maritus imber fluxit almæ conjugis,
Unde fœtus mixtus omnes aleret magno corpore.
Ipsa venas atque mentem permeante spiritu,
Intus occultis gubernat procreatrix viribus,
Perque cœlum, perque terras, perque pontum subditum,
Pervium sui tenorem seminali tramite
Imbuit jussitque mundum nosse nascendi vias.

VIII.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Ipsa Trojanos nepotes in Latinos transtulit,

Ipsa Laurentem puellam conjugem nato dedit;
Moxque Marti de sacello dat pudicam virginem;
Romuleas ipsa fecit cum Sabinis nuptias;
Unde Ramnes et Quirites proque prole posterum,
Romuli patrem crearet et nepotem Cæsarem.

IX.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Rura fœcundat voluptas, rura Venerem sentiunt.
Ipse Amor puer Dionæ rure natus dicitur.
Hunc ager cum parturiret, ipsa suscepit sinu;
Ipsa florum delicatis educavit osculis.

X.

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.
Ecce, jam super genistas explicant tauri latus!
Quisque tutus quo tenetur conjugali fœdere.
Subter umbras cum maritis, ecce, balantum greges!
Et canoras non tacere Diva jussit alites.
Jam loquaces ore rauco stagna cygni perstrepunt:
Adsonat Terei puella subter umbram populi;
Ut putes motus amoris ore dici musico,
Et neges queri sororem de marito barbaro.
Illa cantat; nos tacemus. Quando ver venit meum?
Quando faciam ut chelidon ut tacere desinam?
Perdidi Musam tacendo; nec me Phœbus respicit.
Sic Amyclas cum tacerent, perdidit silentium.
Cras amet qui nunquam amavit; quique amavit, cras amet.

I.

THE VIGIL OF VENUS.

[*First printed 1651.*]

LOVE *he to-morrow, who loved never;*
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

The spring appears, in which the earth
Receives a new harmonious birth;
When all things mutual love unites;
When birds perform their nuptial rites;
And fruitful by her watery lover,
Each grove its tresses doth recover.
Love's Queen to-morrow, in the shade,
Which by these verdant trees is made,
Their sprouting tops in wreaths shall bind,
And myrtles into arbours wind;
To-morrow, raised on a high throne,
Dione shall her laws make known.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

Then the round ocean's foaming flood
Immingled with celestial blood,
'Mongst the blue purple of the main,
And horses whom two feet sustain,
Rising Dione did beget
With fruitful waters dropping wet.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

With flowery jewels everywhere
She paints the purple-colour'd year;
She, when the rising bud receives
Favonius' breath, thrusts forth the leaves,
The naked roof with these t' adorn;
She the transparent dew o' th' morn,
Which the thick air of night still uses
To leave behind, in rain diffuses;
These tears with orient brightness shine,
Whilst they with trembling weight decline,
Whose every drop, into a small
Clear orb distill'd, sustains its fall.
Pregnant with these the bashful rose
Her purple blushes doth disclose.
The drops of falling due that are
Shed in calm nights by every star,
She in her humid mantle holds,
And then her virgin leaves unfolds.
I' th' morn, by her command, each maid
With dewy roses is array'd;
Which from Cythera's crimson blood,
From the soft kisses Love bestow'd,
From jewels, from the radiant flame,
And the sun's purple lustre, came.
She to her spouse shall married be
To-morrow; not ashamed that he

Should with a single knot untie
Her fiery garment's purple dye.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

The goddess bade the nymphs remove
Unto the shady myrtle grove;
The boy goes with the maids, yet none
Will trust, or think Love tame is grown,
If they perceive that anywhere
He arrows doth about him bear.
Go fearless, nympths, for Love hath laid
Aside his arms, and tame is made.
His weapons by command resign'd,
Naked to go he is enjoin'd,
Lest he hurt any by his craft,
Either with flame, or bow, or shaft.
But yet take heed, young nymphs, beware
You trust him not, for Cupid's fair,
Lest by his beauty you be harm'd;
Love naked is completely arm'd.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

Fair Venus virgins sends to thee,
Indued with equal modesty:
One only thing we thee desire,
Chaste Delia, for a while retire;

That the wide forest, that the wood,
May be unstain'd with savage blood.
She would with prayers herself attend thee,
But that she knew she could not bend thee;
She would thyself to come have pray'd,
Did these delights beseem a maid.
Now might'st thou see with solemn rites
The Chorus celebrate three nights;
'Mongst troops whom equal pleasure crowns,
To play and sport upon thy downs;
'Mongst garlands made of various flowers,
'Mongst ever-verdant myrtle bowers.
Ceres nor Bacchus absent be,
Nor yet the poet's deity.
All night we wholly must employ
In vigils, and in songs of joy;
None but Dione must bear sway
Amongst the woods; Delia, give way.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, perserver.

She the tribunal did command
Deck'd with Hyblæan flowers should stand;
She will in judgment sit; the Graces
On either side shall have their places;
Hybla, thy flowers pour forth, whate'er
Was brought thee by the welcome year;

Hybla, thy flowery garment spread,
Wide as is Enna's fruitful mead;
Maids of the country here will be;
Maids of the mountain come to see;
Hither resort all such as dwell
Either in grove, or wood, or well.
The wing'd boy's mother every one
Commands in order to sit down;
Charging the virgins that they must
In nothing Love, though naked, trust.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

Let the fresh covert of a shade
Be by these early flowers display'd,
To-morrow (which with sports and play
We keep) was Æther's wedding day;
When first the father of the spring
Did out of clouds the young year bring.
The husband Shower then courts his spouse,
And in her sacred bosom flows,
That all which that vast body bred
By this defluxion may be fed:
Produced within, she all there sways
By a hid spirit, which by ways
Unknown diffused through soul and veins,
All things both governs and sustains.

Piercing through the unsounded sea,
And earth, and highest heaven, she
All places with her power doth fill,
Which through each part she doth distil;
And to the world the mystic ways
Of all production open lays.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

She to the Latins did transfer
The Trojan nephews; and by her
Was the Laurentian virgin won,
And join'd in marriage to her son.
By her assistance did Mars gain
A votaress from Vesta's fane.
To marriage Romulus betray'd
The Sabine women, by her aid,
(Of Romans the wide-spreading stem,)
And in the long descent of them
In whom that offspring was dilated,
Cæsar her nephew she created.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

The fields are fruitful made by pleasure;
The fields are rich in Venus' treasure;
And Love, Dione's son, fame yields
For truth, his birth had in the fields;

As soon as born the field reliev'd him,
Into its bosom first receiv'd him;
She bred him from his infant hours
With the sweet kisses of the flowers.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

See how the bulls their sides distend,
And broom-stalks with the burthen bend;
Now every one doth safely lie
Confined within his marriage tie;
See, with their husbands here are laid
The bleating flocks beneath the shade.
The warbling birds on every tree
The goddess wills not silent be.
The vocal swans on every lake,
With their hoarse voice a harsh sound make;
And Tereus' hapless maid beneath
The poplar's shade her song doth breathe;
Such as might well persuade thee, love
Doth in those trembling accents move;
Not that the sister in those strains
Of the inhuman spouse complains.
We silent are whilst she doth sing,
How long in coming is my spring?
When will the time arrive, that I
May swallow-like my voice untie?

My muse for being silent flies me,
And Phœbus will no longer prize me:
So did Amiclæ once, whilst all
Silence observed, through silence fall.

Love he to-morrow, who loved never;
To-morrow, who hath loved, persever.

THOMAS STANLEY.

II.

THE VIGIL OF VENUS.

[First printed 1722.]

LET *those love now, who never loved before;*
And those who always loved, now love the more.

The spring, the new, the warbling spring appears;
The youthful season of reviving years;
In spring the loves enkindle mutual heats,
The feather'd nation choose their tuneful mates,
The trees grow fruitful with descending rain,
And, drest in different greens, adorn the plain.
She comes; to-morrow beauty's empress roves
Through walks that winding run within the groves;
She twines the shooting myrtle into bowers,
And ties their meeting tops with wreaths of flowers;
Then, raised sublimely on her easy throne,
From nature's powerful dictates draws her own.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

'Twas on that day which saw the teeming flood
Swell round, impregnate with celestial blood;
Wand'ring in circles stood the finny crew,
The rest was left a void expanse of blue;
Then parent ocean work'd with heaving throes,
And dripping wet the fair Dione rose.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

She paints the purple year with varied show,
Tips the green gem, and make the blossom glow.
She makes the turgid buds receive the breeze,
Expand to leaves and shade the naked trees.
When gath'ring damps the misty nights diffuse,
She sprinkles all the morn with balmy dews;
Bright trembling pearls depend at every spray,
And kept from falling, seem to fall away.
A glossy freshness hence the rose receives,
And blushes sweet through all her silken leaves;
(The drops descending through the silent night,
While stars serenely roll their golden light;)
Close till the morn her humid veil she holds;
Then deck'd with virgin pomp the flower unfolds.
Soon will the morning blush, ye maids, prepare;
In rosy garlands bind your flowing hair;
'Tis Venus' plant: the blood fair Venus shed,
O'er the gay beauty pour'd immortal red:
From love's soft kiss a sweet ambrosial smell
Was taught for ever on the leaves to dwell;
From gems, from flames, from orient rays of light,
The richest lustre makes her purple bright;
And she to-morrow weds; the sportive gale
Unties her zone; she bursts the verdant veil;
Through all her sweets the rifling lover flies,
And as he breathes, her glowing fires arise.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

Now fair Dione to the myrtle grove
Sends the gay Nymphs, and sends her tender love.
And shall they venture? Is it safe to go,
While nymphs have hearts and Cupid wears a bow?
Yes, safely venture; 'tis his mother's will;
He walks unarm'd and undesiring ill;
His torch extinct, his quiver useless hung,
His arrows idle, and his bow unstrung.
And yet, ye nymphs, beware, his eyes have charms;
And love that's naked, still is love in arms.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

From Venus' bower to Delia's lodge repairs
A virgin train complete with modest airs:
"Chaste Delia, grant our suit! oh shun the wood,
Nor stain this sacred lawn with savage blood.
Venus, O Delia, if she could persuade,
Would ask thy presence, might she ask a maid."
Here cheerful choirs for three auspicious nights
With songs prolong the pleasurable rites:
Her crowds in measures lightly decent move;
Or seek by pairs the covert of the grove,
Where meeting greens for arbours arch above,
And mingling flowerets strew the scenes of love.

Here dancing Ceres shakes her golden sheaves;
Here Bacchus revels, deckt with viny leaves;
Here wit's enchanting god, in laurel crown'd,
Wakes all the ravish'd hours with silver sound.
Ye fields, ye forests, own Dione's reign,
And Delia, huntress Delia, shun the plain.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

Gay with the bloom of all her opening year,
The Queen at Hybla bids her throne appear,
And there presides; and there the fav'rite band,
Her smiling Graces, share the great command.
Now, beauteous Hybla! dress thy flowery beds
With all the pride the lavish season sheds;
Now all thy colours, all thy fragrance yield,
And rival Enna's aromatic field.
To fill the presence of the gentle court
From every quarter rural Nymphs resort,
From woods, from mountains, from these humble vales,
From waters curling with the wanton gales.
Pleased with the joyful train, the laughing Queen
In circles seats them round the bank of green;
And, "lovely girls," she whispers, "guard your hearts;
My boy, though stript of arms, abounds in arts."

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

Let tender grass in shaded alleys spread;
Let early flowers erect their painted head;
To-morrow's glory be to-morrow seen;
That day old Ether wedded Earth in green.
The vernal father bade the spring appear,
In clouds he coupled to produce the year;
The sap descending o'er her bosom ran,
And all the various sorts of soul began
By wheels unknown to sight, by secret veins
Distilling life; the fruitful goddess reigns
Through all the lovely realms of native day,
Through all the circled land and circling sea;
With fertile seed she fill'd the pervious earth,
And ever fix'd the mystic ways of birth.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

'Twas she, the parent, to the Latian shore
Through various dangers Troy's remainder bore.
She won Lavinia for her warlike son,
And winning her, the Latian empire won.
She gave to Mars the maid whose honour'd womb
Swell'd with the founder of immortal Rome.
Decoy'd by shows the Sabine dames she led,
And taught our vigorous youth the means to wed.
Hence sprung the Romans, hence the race divine
Through which great Cæsar draws his Julian line.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

In rural seats the soul of pleasure reigns;
The love of Beauty fills the rural scenes;
Ev'n Love (if fame the truth of Love declare)
Drew first the breathings of a rural air,
Some pleasing meadow pregnant Beauty prest,
She laid her infant on its bowery breast;
From nature's sweets he supp'd the fragrant dew,
He smiled, he kiss'd them, and by kissing grew.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

Now bulls o'er stalks of broom extend their sides,
Secure of favours from their lowing brides.
Now stately rams their fleecy consorts lead,
Who bleating follow through the wand'ring shade.
And now the goddess bids the birds appear,
Raise all their music, and salute the year;
Then deep the swan begins, and deep the song
Runs o'er the water where he sails along;
While Philomela tunes a treble strain,
And from the poplar charms the list'ning plain.
We fancy love exprest at every note;
It melts, it warbles in her liquid throat.
Of barbarous Tereus she complains no more,
But sings for pleasure, as for grief before.

And still her graces rise, her airs extend,
And all is silence till the syren end.
How long in coming is my lovely spring?
And when shall I, and when the swallow sing?
Sweet Philomela, cease; — or here I sit,
And silent loose my rapturous hour of wit.
'Tis gone; the fit retires, the flames decay;
My tuneful Phœbus flies averse away.
His own Amyclæ thus, as stories run,
But once was silent, and that once undone.

Let those love now, who never loved before;
And those who always loved, now love the more.

THOMAS PARNELL.

III.

THE VIGIL OF VENUS.

[First published 1843.]

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

Spring, young Spring, with song and mirth;
Spring is on the new-born earth.
Spring is here, the time of love, —
The merry birds pair in the grove,
And the green trees hang their tresses,
Loosen'd by the rain's caresses.
To-morrow sees the dawn of May,
When Venus will her sceptre sway,
Glorious in her justice-hall:
There where woodland shadows fall,
On bowers of myrtle intertwined,
Many a band of love she'll bind.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

To-morrow is the day when first
From the foam-world of Ocean burst,

Like one of his own waves, the bright
Dione, queen of love and light,
Amid the sea-god's azure train,
'Mid the strange horses of the main.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

She it is who lends the Hours
Their crimson glow, their jewel-flowers:
At her command the buds are seen,
Where the west-wind's breath hath been,
To swell within their dwellings green.
She abroad those dewdrops flings,
Dew that night's cool softness brings;
How the bright tears hang declining,
And glisten with a tremulous shining,
Almost of weight to drop away,
And yet too light to leave the spray.
Hence the tender plants are bold
Their blushing petals to unfold:
'Tis that dew, which through the air
Falls from heaven when night is fair,
That unbinds the moist green vest
From the floweret's maiden breast.
'Tis Venus' will, when morning glows,
'Twill be the bridal of each rose.

Then the bride-flower shall reveal,
What her veil doth now conceal,
The blush divinest, which of yore
She caught from Venus' trickling gore,
With Love's kisses mixed, I trow,
With blaze of fire, and rubies' glow,
And with many a crimson ray
Stolen from the birth of day.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

All the nymphs the Queen of Love
Summons to the myrtle-grove;
And see ye, how her wanton boy
Comes with them to share our joy?
Yet, if Love be arm'd, they say,
Love can scarce keep holiday:
Love without his bow is straying!
Come, ye nymphs, Love goes a Maying.
His torch, his shafts, are laid aside,—
From them no harm shall you betide.
Yet, I rede ye, nymphs, beware,
For your foe is passing fair;
Love is mighty, ye'll confess,
Mighty e'en in nakedness;

And most panoplied for fight
When his charms are bared to sight.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

Dian, a petition we,
By Venus sent, prefer to thee:
Virgin envoys, it is meet
Should the Virgin-huntress greet:
Quit the grove, nor it profane
With the blood of quarry slain.
She would ask thee, might she dare
Hope a maiden's thought to share,—
She would bid thee join us now,
Might cold maids our sport allow.
Now three nights thou may'st have seen,
Wandering through thine alleys green,
Troops of joyous friends, with flowers
Crown'd, amidst their myrtle bowers.
Ceres and Bacchus us attend,
And great Apollo is our friend;
All night we must our vigil keep,—
Night, by song redeem'd from sleep.
Let Venus in the woods bear sway,
Dian, quit the grove, we pray.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

Of Hybla's flowers, so Venus will'd,
Venus' judgment-seat we build:
She is judge supreme; the Graces,
As assessors, take their places.
Hybla, render all thy store
All the season sheds thee o'er,
Till a hill of bloom be found
Wide as Enna's flowery ground.
Attendant nymphs shall here be seen,
Those who delight in forest green,
Those who on mountain top abide,
And these whom sparkling fountains hide.
All these the Queen of joy and sport
Summons to attend her court,
And bids them all of Love beware,
Although the guise of peace he wear!

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

Fresh be your coronals of flowers,
And green your overarching bowers,

To-morrow brings us the return
Of Ether's primal marriage-morn.
In amorous showers of rain he came
T' embrace his bride's mysterious frame,
To generate the blooming year,
And all the produce Earth does bear.
Venus still through vein and soul
Bids the genial current roll;
Still she guides its secret course
With interpenetrating force,
And breathes through heaven, and earth,
and sea,
A reproductive energy.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

She old Troy's extinguish'd glory
Revived in Latium's later story,
When, by her auspices, her son
Laurentia's royal damsel won.
She vestal Rhea's spotless charms
Surrender'd to the war-god's arms;
She for Romulus that day
The Sabine daughters bore away;
Thence sprung the Rhamnes' lofty name,
Thence the old Quirites came;

And thence the stock of high renown,
The blood of Romulus, handed down
Through many an age of glory pass'd
To blaze in Cæsar's fame at last!

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

All rural nature feels the glow
Of quickening passion through it flow.
Love, in rural scenes of yore,
They say, his goddess-mother bore;
Received on Earth's sustaining breast
Th' ambrosial infant sunk to rest;
And him the wild-flowers, o'er his head
Bending, with sweetest kisses fed.

He that never loved before,
Let him love to-morrow!
He that hath loved o'er and o'er,
Let him love to-morrow!

On yellow broom out yonder, see,
The mighty bulls lie peacefully.
Each animal of field or grove
Owns faithfully the bond of love.
The flocks of ewes, beneath the shade,
Around their gallant rams are laid;

And Venus bids the birds awake
To pour their song through plain and brake.
Hark! the noisy pools reply
To the swan's hoarse harmony;
And Philomel is vocal now,
Perch'd upon a poplar bough.
Thou scarce would'st think that dying fall
Could ought but love's sweet griefs recall;
Thou scarce would'st gather from her song
The tale of brother's barbarous wrong.
She sings; but I must silent be: —
When will the spring-tide come for me?
When, like the swallow, Spring's own bird,
Shall my faint twittering notes be heard?
Alas! the muse, while silent I
Remain'd, hath gone and passed me by,
Nor Phœbus listens to my cry.
And thus forgotten, I await,
By silence lost, Amyclæ's fate.

CHARLES GIPPS PROWETT,

Sometime Fellow and Lecturer of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

IV.

THE VIGIL OF VENUS.

I.

THOU *hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us in the morn.*

Spring is new, already tuneful, Earth is with the Spring reborn.

In the Spring new loves are twining, in the Spring the flit-wings pair.

While the grove admits the rain, and robes her in her bridal hair.

In the morn the Love-combiner from the myrtle in the shade,

Throwing up her budding houses, will have leafy bowers made.

In the morn Dione judges, on her haughty throne upborne.

II.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.

By the sea from blood immortal, from a ball of rolling foam,

Where the waves are azure-tinted, and the dolphin squadrons roam,

Sprang Dione, undule-maiden, to the rain's embraces born.

III.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.

She herself with flower jewels, paints the purpling of the year;
She herself with southern whisperings, brings the swelling bosoms near
To their well-loved habitations; with the sparkle of the dew,
That the sigh of night has left, she dampens o'er the waves anew.
Trembling tearlets gleam and glitter, seeming ever 'bout to fall,
Headlong last they drop; united hangs their little all in all.
Now the purplings of the flowers have forgot their modest hue;
For the humors of the stars, distilled by nights serene to dew,
Loosing from their breasts the clinging, rend at last the garment frail.
In the morn she bids herself the rosebud take the wedding veil;
Cypris, from the veins of Love and from his kisses made divine,
Out of gem and out of flame, and purple of the spring sunshine.

In the morn it shall not shame them to have rent the fiery gown,
And disclose the rubral whiteness to the husband all their own.

IV.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.

She herself has told the nymphs, their steps to myrtle groves are borne.
With the maidens goes her boy; they cannot trust with Love to play,
If he bears his arrows with him, 'tis not Cupid's holiday.
Hurry, maidens! he has dropped them, Love is on a holiday,
He is bidden go unarmed and naked he is sent to play,
Lest he hurt you with the bow, or bolt or burning of his sting.
All the same, look out for Love, girls; for the boy's a pretty thing.
Naked tho' he be, of weapons sure he can't be all forlorn.

V.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.

Thou art honored, Venus loves thee; see! her maidens to thee sent,

Only one thing ask thee, Delia, that thy groves to her be lent.
She herself had glad invited, but thy virgin heart forbade,
She herself would wish thee present, if 'twere fitting for a maid.
Thou wouldst look across thy meadows, where the gathered squadrons bright
Watched the three long files of maidens dancing thro' the merry night,
Mid the flower-crowns of Venus, and the bowers myrtle-woe;
Bacchus, Ceres in the band, and Phœbus whom the poets love.
All the night we must not sleep, but wake and watch with dancing strain.
Thou must leave us then, Diana; in the woods let Venus reign.

VI.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.
She herself the blooms of Hybla, bade about her bench be torn,
She herself will hold the court, the Graces on the bench will be.
Hybla, pour thy blooms about them, all the year has brought to thee.

Robe thee, Hybla, richly robe thee, such as
Enna's plain does show.
Here will come the rural nymphs, and
nymphs that o'er the mountains go,
Dryads of the woods and groves, and nymphs
that by the fountains flit.
Every one has Cupid's mother ordered on
the bench to sit.
All the girls, tho' Love is naked, not to
trust him she does warn.

VII.

*Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall
find us with the morn.*
While the blooms are in the bud, she well
may rule the spring-time grove,
For the morrow is the day, when Æther first
made one the loves.
When the Father, Vernal Father, with his
clouds begot the year,
All his marriage floods he showered on her
wifely bosom dear.
She herself, the Life-imbuer, sends her spirit
pulsing light
Thro' their veins and thro' their souls; she
rules them with an inner might.
In the skies and o'er the earth and o'er the
stretchings of the sea,

With the magic of her life she sets creation's
pathways free.
Taught us then to know her world, and learn
whereby all things are born.

VIII.

*Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall
find us with the morn.*
She herself the Trojan offspring, bore to
Latium o'er the sea;
She herself Laurentum's maiden, gave her
grandson's bride to be;
She herself from out her chapel gave the
maiden bride to Mars;
She herself each Sabine woman, married to
a Roman lars,
Whence the Ramnes and Quirites, and at
last the saving grace,
Cæsar uncle, nephew Cæsar, for the Roman
after-race.

IX.

*Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall
find us with the morn.*
All the fields are love-impregnate, love
comes pulsing thro' the corn,
Where the boy, Dione's Cupid, in the fields,
they say, found birth;
On her breast, when Venus bore him, he was
laid to Mother Earth.

There the goddess fed him kisses, honey-sweetened, flower-born.

X.

Thou hast loved, but I have never; love shall find us with the morn.

Look! the bulls are by the broom-plant, every side is to the ground,
Each contented with his mate, each happy in his union found.
Look! the herds are in the shadow, bleating in the married throng.
She herself commands the flit-wings not to cease their tuneful song;
Now the marshes loud resound, where sings the swan with hoary throat;
By the poplar in the shade, the songs of Tereus' daughter float.
You would think she sang of love, or warbled to some passion strain,
Never guess she wept her lord so cruel to her sister's pain.
She is singing, I am silent; when shall I too see the Spring?
When shall I do as the swallow, and at last begin to sing?
While I lingered, song has left me; Phœbus calls me his no more,
So Amyclæ, while it waited, silence ruined by the shore.

LAURENCE HAYWARD.

NOTE.

The Vigil of Venus is an anonymous poem, written perhaps in the third century of our era. Its date can be fixed only by inference, but from . . . similarity to Nemesianus and Reposianus, and from its own genuine enthusiasm for the ancient gods, we may hazard the opinion that it is the product of a brief but brilliant celebration of the old religion which found popular expression about 300 A. D., just before the pantheon passed from the hearts of the people for ever. The author was probably an African; at any rate, the mellowness, the almost over-ripeness of his verse suggest the extreme south as his birthplace, and his looseness of construction, in particular his use of *de* almost as if it were a preposition in a modern Romance tongue, is peculiar to Africa. The florid richness of his imagination has found expression in the Vigil through a verse suited equally well to Latin and to English, for the trochaic lines of the poem combine the syllable measurement of the ancients with our word accent. It has been suggested that the best known English example of this verse, "Locksley Hall," has, in its famous lines beginning "In the Spring," borrowed something more from the Vigil than its metre.

The women of Rome were accustomed to celebrate on the first three nights of April, the rites of Venus Genetrix—Venus, Mother of the Springing Year—and it is this festival, in joint honor of spring and of its goddess, that is sung in the Pervigilium Veneris. With the opening of spring, Venus the inspirer of all life, resumes her magic power; she was born in marvellous but appropriate wise from the leaven-like foam of the

sea; she opens the beauty of the bud and paints the year in all its bloom. Her festival is now at hand and the maidens follow young Cupid to the myrtle groves; Diana, huntress and virgin, may not be of their number; they beg the loan of her haunts for the night of the vigil. There the bands of maidens will dance and sing before Venus; she will sit in judgment amid flowers fair as Hybla ever grew, and with the graces will hold the court of love. Once more the poet sings of the opening year; it is Venus that has awakened it to life. The famous and the good all have risen at her touch; the long line that has controlled the destinies of Rome, has been her creation. Once more all nature rejoices; the whole world of living things feels her power. Only one is unawakened; a silence, ominous of the muse that was passing from Italy, holds the poet and his lost song; a silence that was to hang for nearly a thousand years over the land before she should hear again so sweet a strain.

L. H.

The Bibelot

As a contributor of high standing to the leading London reviews the [redacted] of Augustus Jessopp, D. D., must be well known to many readers on both sides of the Atlantic. Judging, however, from the dates of the latest editions of his collected papers the American interest in his books has not proved all that could be desired by the publishers.[1] *As for the story of peasant life here reprinted entire it is not found in its author's more recent volumes; indeed without aid of the London Reference Catalogue it is doubtful if we had willingly gone to the S. P. C. K. list of publications*

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1 *The Rev. Augustus Jessopp, D.D., is the author of the following books: Arcady: For Better for Worse. A Study of Rural Life in England, Portrait, 1887. The Trials of a Country Parson, 1890. Studies by a Recluse, in Cloister, Town and Country, 1893. Random Roaming and Other Papers, with Portrait, 1893. The Coming of the Friars and Other Historic Essays. Eleventh Impression, 1901.*

The above works in the English edition can be had of G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, whose imprint appears on all save the last volume.

in search of literary treasure-trove. Therein was discovered Doris: An Idyl of Arcady, *printed in 1892 — the same year that Jefferies last book* — The Toilers of the Field — *came out.*

The term 'idyl' must not be taken literally; 'the field and fold' is assuredly not of Theocritus, nor do the oaten pipes of Pan sound sweetly to the ear. Barring Jefferies' wonderful magic of style, Doris *if not as cruelly wrought out as* The Field Plays[2] *is indubitably of the same sombre* genre. *It is in all essentials a true and faithful report at firsthand of the very humble and the very poor. Both writers were dwellers in the Arcady they describe — English counties still in the map. The end of Doris is scarcely less pitiable than the uncertain fate of Dolly: in no wise does the Potter spare his clay.*

> *"As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,*
> *They kill us for their sport."* —

From this sinister aspect of life our idyl turns aside to a more merciful begging of

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2 *See* The Bibelot, *July, 1900.*

the ever present question: the destitution and sordid misery which no man or generation of men has yet made tolerable.

The Light that has revealed itself to so many other dying eyes shone at last into the eyes of Doris: — a belief underlying the still wider hope that

"God's Greatness flows around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

DORIS: AN IDYL OF ARCADY,
By
AUGUSTUS JESSOPP, D. D.

DORIS: AN IDYL OF ARCADY.

DORIS is dead — really dead! Not "dead ere her prime," for she had known the glories of more than eighty summers, and the blaze of their sunlight had not tanned her cheek nor much dimmed the fire of her glowing eye. Grown men and women who had all their lives felt a shrinking fear of Doris found it hard to believe that she had verily and indeed breathed her last. The immense, exuberant vitality of the woman, her audacity, her wicked joyousness, her ready caustic tongue, her terrible beauty, her immeasurable self-reliance, had made her name and her presence a dread to little children in our streets and lanes. "Somehow we were all afraid of Doris years ago," men say: "we got out of her way; we ran and hid from her. Is she really dead?" Yes, dead at last! Even Doris.

I am — I know not how or why — I am constrained to speak of Doris. Why have great painters, time and again, taken brush in hand and — fascinated, *possessed,* by some ghastly image that would not pass from them night or day — found no rest till they put the haunting face upon the canvas — left it there

to awake a shudder of horror or disgust for all who should gaze hereafter upon it? Who of us has not felt angered now and then by such ghastly pictures — I need not name them — and found himself exclaiming, "This is too revolting; it is the prostitution of art"? well! if the artist used his skill merely to display to us a *tour de force,* he was guilty of a crime; at any rate that is what I hold to be true. But, if he could not choose but get rid of the phantoms that would rise up and stay and glare at him, scowling, threatening, making mows at him and ceasing not; if there was no hope, no help for it; if with their dumb insistence they demanded to be shown to a vulgar crowd; if he knew and felt in the depths of him that all visions of loveliness and peace were lost to him till this dream of horror and villany were hurled out of the way by being fixed in colour and form, and so sent from him — what shall we say then? Do you think that Velasquez, when he painted that awful picture of the scourging of the Man of Sorrows that hangs in our National Gallery, could have felt any joy as the overwhelming dreadfulness of his work grew into ever more and more ghastly distinctness?

Do you think that Ezekiel's cheek was not of a deadly pallor, or that his knees smote not one against the other, when he stared with parted lips and wide-open eyes at the dead men's bones that lay in the valley, and saw them, heard them, coming together bone to his bone? He did not *choose* to go upon that dread errand; the hand of the Lord was upon him, and carried him there whether he would or no.

You poets, how I envy you! Men forgive *you,* applaud *you,* render *you* almost adoring thanks for your utterances because you sing to them in your majestic verse, sweet, strong, all harmony; because you sweep the strings which we of the common herd can never touch without a discord. And yet for us, the beasts of burden of common prose, because we have no wings and cannot soar to your empyrean, we are told to know our place and never, never to step out of our sphere. You ride in your chariots of fire; we must keep between the shafts of the carts and wains that lumber along the common roads of the common world. Yet I cannot choose but write of Doris!

Doris was born at Nestané. Let that suf-

fice. At Nestané there stands, or there stood, a little while ago, a windmill, and, before this century began, the miller who had worked it had risen to be its owner. He prospered after a fashion—a shrewd, sagacious, grasping man, tradition says. He had a son and daughter. The son was a riotous, dissipated rake. The miller was growing old; the son broke his father's heart, spent his money, robbed him. The old man moped, grew morbid, half silly, mortgaged his little property, the mill, some few acres here and there, and a row of houses. What was the daughter doing? I gather that she was a high-spirited, passionate lass, full-blooded, impetuous, with a restless soul. She held things together. Why should she not manage the mill? She kept the books and drew up the accounts as it was. No sooner, however, had she contrived to get things straight at this point or at that, and money matters were beginning to look brighter again, than that hulking brother of hers would stroll in, bully and cajole the whimpering old father, and make off with the last little hoard — the sot! It was unbearable. She would marry the first man that asked her, come what might.

There was a jaunty young shoemaker in the next village, tall and strong. In those days there was a small settlement of shoemakers at Skeorn's Inga, the next parish to Nestané. The little row of four shanties (one room above, one below, in neither of which can a tall man stand up with his hat on) still stands where it did, and as it did, nearly a hundred years ago; the four shanties still hold four families, one of them a family of nine, three grown men, two grown women, four growing boys and girls, the youngest ten years old. The shoemakers were all in full work, and in the employment of a master shoemaker who took small contracts for the shop-keepers at Norwich. Jaunty Jem was a good workman, stuck to his last, and was an average sort of rustic.

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"Folks say as you'll marry the first man as asks you. Will you marry me?" The girl was in a fury when Jem came to her in this straightforward fashion; her brother had just slunk away with another haul from the old man's purse, which purse his daughter had only managed to fill the day before.

How would it end? "Marry you? You can't write your name. I know you well enough. I want a husband to help me keep the mill. You'd be no good. And yet . . ."

She hesitated and was lost. She thought, "Jem is a proper man. I'll teach him to read and write—it'll keep him at home o' nights; he'll take to milling. Oh, heart of mine, how it beats! shall I give it to Jaunty Jem?"

So they were married. Alas! Things went on worse and worse. Jem grew idle; the lonely life of the mill bored him; the old father's drivel he could not away with. He took to deeper and more frequent potations of beer. Doris was born, then other children came. What would not many a peer give for such babies as they, heavy as the cubs of a lioness, noisy, strong and dauntless, but with appetites that were frightful!

One day the old miller, sitting in his chair "among the gooseberry bushes" — as Doris said — was more than ordinarily restless and querulous. He would see his *peeaypers* — the lawyers had not got them all, not they; he had still something he could call his own. They brought him a box full of small conveyances. He could not read a word of

them, not he; but he mumbled out that they were damp, they must be dried. Fingering them in a drivelling way, one by one, as he sat in the sunshine, nothing would do but he must have them spread out upon the gooseberry bushes. There they stuck crinkling in the noonday. Doris remembered it. Suddenly a wind arose—a whirlwind. The parchments were tossed up by the squall hither and thither, a wondrous sport to the chubby children, a quite extraordinary game of kite-flying. Doris had a notion that this was the ruin of grandfather, some suspicion that "the lawyers had got hold of the pee-aypers"—not without help of the devil, the tutelar deity and favourer of lawyers.

A few days after this the miller died. There was no will, but the old man had made over the row of houses, aforesaid, to Mrs. Jem, and all that was left—mill and lands, heavily encumbered — came to the brother. What was the end of the brother? "Lawk, I don't know; and what's more, I don't care; why should I?" said Doris. Why need we care?

Farewell to the mill. Jaunty Jem took his wife and four sturdy toddlers to Dereham

"to look after the property," as he phrased it, and to soak himself in beer. He had occasional fits of industry, but the drink took hold of him. The unhappy wife and mother had a sad life of it, sinking deeper and deeper—she was quite beaten at last, all the spirit in her crushed. Only one pathetic scene had fixed itself in Doris's memory. She had never learnt to read, but the mother had kept one relic of the old prosperity, which she clung to, I know not why. It was a book, and a big one.

"Possible you might have a History of England?" said Doris to me, abruptly, a year or so ago. Yes! I had such a work. "Ah! so had my mother. It was a great big book, as big as that table. I remember when she hadn't much else — for 'most all the furniture and sich was gone—she used to show it us of a Sunday. There was a sight of *gays* (illustrations) in that there great book, and she'd tell us about 'em. I mind one day she was showing 'em to us, and I looked up and she was a-crying. 'What are you a-crying for, mother?' says I, and she never said not a word, but she shut the great history book, as she used to call it. I never heard

what became of that great book. That was all the learning we had!"

Jaunty Jem's career was not a long one. One day, when Doris was just fourteen, Jem rolled into the gutter, staggered out, lurched against a loaded cart, which passed over him, crawled home, and next day Mrs. Jem was a ragged widow, with eight ragged, shoeless children, hungry, defiant and clamorous, demanding victuals. Without more ado they were bundled off to the workhouse. Such a workhouse! I pass it frequently. It is a ramshackle block, now divided into six or eight tenements, looking picturesquely squalid, noisome and filthy. Slums you people of the towns call them. It is always a subject of not unspoken thankfulness to the Great Disposer of our paths that that dreary old workhouse is outside the boundaries of my parish.

Doris was now fourteen. She was at once apprenticed by the parish authorities to somebody who wanted a maid-of-all-work. Note that this was about seventy years ago. The girl was started in life, with the scantiest of wardrobes, but probably more clothes on her back than she had worn for years. She

made a good servant, they say. With her prodigious energy, quickness, and intelligence she could never be idle; but, let her mistress have been what she might, Doris must have been a "handful."

Before she had been at her place six months, master and mistress left her in the house with the children to see to. It was winter-time. There had been heavy snow; now there was a sloppy thaw. There were troops of gaunt, lean men out of work, begging from door to door. One of them stopped at Doris's door. "Doris! I'm almost dropping: you know me; look at my arms!" The starving wretch was a limping skeleton. The girl dashed into the house, snatched a loaf from the cupboard, thrust it into the bony hand, and burst into a storm of furious railing against all things in heaven and earth. The children were frightened; and to add to the horror of the incident (from their point of view) they were put upon short commons till their parents' return. Then there was a scene. "Take my children's bread and give it to a tramp?" Doris recriminated; her young blood was up. "Thief," was she? "God's wrath upon you, skinflints that you

are! Give the brats stones to suck once a day in these cruel times; they'll be none the worse. But let the fathers that earn the bread starve? Never!" Would she promise never to do it again? Not she. Jail! Who cares for jail? They might as well have tried to deal with Ætna in eruption. The lava stream of glowing speech went billowing on, carrying all before it. Passion rouses passion, and the weaker and the beaten of two combatants is for the most part the most vindictive and implacable. The end of it was that Doris was carried before the magistrates, and sent for a month to Swaffham Bridewell!

"Good fortune departs, and disaster's behind."
Hark the wind with its wants and its infinite wail!

* * * * *

Swaffham Bridewell — that's a real name this time. I was going to call it Pandemonium, but that would have been a poor feeble word for the thing signified. Twenty years or so before this time Howard had paid a visit to Swaffham Bridewell. This is what he found there: —

"Three rooms below; one of which, a lodging-room for men, is too close (10 feet 9 inches by 7 feet 9 inches); a work-room, 17 feet by 15, but no employment; and four rooms above. Court enlarged, now 28 feet square, but no pump. . . . Keeper's salary, £16, and twenty shillings a year for straw. Clauses against spirituous liquors hung up; license for beer. . . . Prisoners, eleven, *including the lunatic*."

One pound per annum allowed for providing straw for all the prisoners. The court—in which alone the wretched jail birds could exercise their wasted limbs for a few minutes at a time, by special grace of the keeper, salaried at £16 a year — when *enlarged* measured 28 feet square; and no pump. The howling lunatic — the ruffians in their fetters — the filth — the blasphemy — the ferocity — the despair. Think of it! Did "their Dante of the dread Inferno" ever image a horribler den than this?

Six or seven years ago, when the Salvationists were strong and vociferous in Tegea, a band of them marching down the street met Doris as she was trudging along jocund and contemptuous. "You're a-going to hell!

You're a-going to hell!" cried voice after voice, and the Mænad who led the motley procession stopped her walking backwards, faced about, and halted. The very drummer held his hand and ceased his thumping. "You're a-going to hell! You're a-going to hell! Doris! you're a-going to hell!" echoed again and again. Doris stood still and the twinkle in her laughing eye meant anything but fear. "Hell! what do you know about hell, ye sillies? I've been in hell, I have—spent a month there fifty years ago. Sin' I got out, many's the time I've danced all night and larked all day, and I'd do it again now if I could. Hell? Go on wi' you! wi' your drumming and your bumming, and your tootling! That there hell's been pulled down sin' I was there. *You* ain't agoing to build that up again—for all your fal-lals. Go on wi' you!"

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Dreadful gleams of the after life were flashed upon me now and then. Doris would now and then drop a hint or something more. The old people too have sometimes told me scraps of their reminiscences in a shy, shame-

faced way. What staggered them, almost frightened them, was the glaring, irresistible beauty of the woman — her immeasurable force — her masterful insolent fluency — her never-failing wit and drollery. "She was a wicked woman!" says one; "leastways, folks said so. But lawk! I dunno much about her. Early or late she was gay as a peacock. Seemed as if no one never saw her what you may call *down*. She was that fresh-coloured as I've heard say she never blushed and she never blenched. She might ha' married a dozen on 'em; but no! she couldn't abide being bound. When she took up wi' Joe Bickers she'd found her master, but she'd never marry him. Beautiful? Well! I don't understand that. But she was that handsome as she was a wonder to look at." My predecessor in this benefice tried hard to induce her to marry Joe Bickers. " 'Tain't no use your talking," said Joe, impatiently; "I've been trying to make her marry me for all forty years — 'tain't likely you're going to talk her over!"

When I made her acquaintance first, Joe Bickers, who was some fifteen years older than Doris, had grown blind and useless.

He soon took to his bed, where his habit was to bellow snatches of old songs — hunting songs — poaching songs — sea songs. "Hold your noise, ye old fool!" I've heard her cry; "there's the parson coming along." The fierce old ruffian used to like my coming to him, but he had no more conscience than a carrot. It seemed impossible to arouse the faintest response to any appeal to the moral sense. My heart used to die within me sometimes. The only occasion on which I noticed anything like an approach to gentleness was when he said to me once, with signs of vexation that he had been brought to unbend so far, "You're a good sort, anyhow! and God A'mighty will reward you, I don't doubt. But what's the use of your a-talking to me? I ain't fit for no other place than this. Soul? If you could see my soul, you'd see such a dirty un as you ain't often met. Who's a-going to save a rotten tater? 'tain't worth it!" But the ascendency which Joe Bickers had acquired, and retained for over forty years, over Doris was unbounded. She was his slave. The secret of it, I doubt not, was that she had a heart and he had none — a cruel, noisy, jovial,

boisterous, reckless giant, of the stuff that the old buccaneers were made of. But marry him she never would, and never did. She never would marry any one. It was not for want of asking. "Why, there was one of 'em that wild he come and plumpt down on his knees and swore he'd never get up till I'd marry him. He'd a-given me thousands!" "Why in the world did you not take him, Doris?" "What, marry a man that had flopped on his marrow bones and squealed like a pig? Yah! 'Twarn't likely! Why, if I'd married one of 'em, you see, I should ha' belonged to him. Then — possible — I'd have got tired of him. I'm thinking o' my mother, I am. Much *she* got by marrying."

During those months when I used to go and visit fierce old Bickers—though he was as hard as the nether millstone—there came a gradual change over Doris. The strange couple lived in a ruinous hovel, which was one of two when I first knew it; the other house (?) grew so dangerous that the owner dismantled it, used some of the rafters to prop up Joe Bickers's tottering wall, sold the tiles for a few shillings, and patched up some holes in the roof. In this miserable

ruin the old ruffian died. While he lay there, fading away, it was my business to drop in and sit with him.

They had abandoned the upper room, where the bats hid under the tiles and flew in and out at pleasure, and the wind whistled and the snowflakes found an easy entrance; and they had put up their big four-post bedstead on the ground floor. It was a tight fit. They did not lack for covering, and there were lumps of various dimensions which in the aggregate constituted a mattress, and there lay Joe Bickers.

Once as I was speaking in my feeble way of Him who came to seek and to save them that were lost, Doris, with her back turned, sat huddling over the apology for a fire, pretending to take no notice. Suddenly, Joe burst out into a coarse laugh. "My toes, if she ain't a-crying!" Doris started up, turning her face away, and flung herself out of the house. "What a brute you are to laugh at the woman!" I exclaimed, for I was roused. "You're blind. It was a lie. You couldn't have seen her if she had cried!" He laughed again. "My toes! Many's the time I've give her a black eye, but I never

see her blubbering for all that. But see or no see, she's been blubbering now. 'Think I don't know! I tell you she's a-crying!" I saw no more of her that day. Next time she began by being as reckless as usual. The old reprobate was evidently sinking. For the first time she condescended to consult me. "I don't know what to make of him. He keeps calling out he'll be shaved. He won't die, he says, unless he's shaved, and I don't want him to die. I want to keep him. Do you think, sir, as I ought to have him shaved?" There was a grotesque pathos about the question. Doris dreaded the thought of hastening his end.

* * * * *

Doris was left alone. She had still a great deal of vigour and infinite pluck. She had her donkey, too, and her cart, and she contrived, literally, to pick up a livelihood. She never begged; she had many friends here and there, who were always ready with a shilling. People who condemned her irregular life were ready to cast a veil over her antecedents. She was proud as Lucifer in

her way, and scorned to apologize for what she had not scorned to commit. She rather made the worst of herself than the best. She forgot nothing; she knew everybody — especially all their old peccadilloes. Truly a formidable personage, whom prudence suggested should be best left alone to go her own way.

The donkey cart grew very rickety. She took it to the wheelwright, a kindly man in his way. "Mr. Tuck, I want you to mend this cart; what will it cost? What will it cost *you*, that's my meaning; for you must mend it up and I shan't pay you for it. Leastways, I don't think I ever shall!" The cart was mended. Doris went on in the old way, doing little jobs, getting shillings, scraps, and small doles. Then the donkey broke down. One day we missed the patient little brute. "Where's the dickey, Doris?" Simon, the knacker, had gone to her to buy it. What for? For somebody's kennel. What would he give? Half a crown. What would he charge for shooting it? A shilling. And dig the hole too? Yes, he didn't mind that. Doris stood by as he dug the hole, then she pulled out her shilling. "Now you

may shoot him. I ain't a-going to have my dickey feed the dogs!" The old dickey rolled into his grave, and the two covered him over. Doris was desolate. "I've had three on 'em—this last one better nor twenty years. He fared as if he looked at me that morning, and said 'Good-bye'!"

Men and women who are absolutely fearless always have a power over animals. Doris would have laughed at a mad bull, and the monster would have turned away from her; the fiercest dog would trot up to her, thrust his nose into her hand, and caper round her. Quite recently I was complaining to a good woman that there were no hedgehogs to be found. "Begging your pardon, sir, Doris could find you a hedgehog any day; she says they come out to look at her!" In fact, a week before she had taken a young hedgehog to one of our cottagers a mile off and given it to her. Some time afterwards she had dropt in to inquire about the hedgehog. The little creature had not taken kindly to its new home, had hidden away, and only came out in the evening when the black-beetles emerged from their holes. As the two women were gossiping—

lo! in the broad noonday there appeared the hedgehog. It ran up to Doris, crooning softly, as their wont is, and seeming to ask to be noticed.

When the donkey was gone, Doris—still living in the old hovel—had to trust to her own feet. Coming back every evening, weary, often wet and hungry, no fire in the grate and scanty provisions in the cupboard, the hard life began to tell upon her. She had never had an hour's illness. Her hair had grown grey, but there were still tangled masses of it shadowing the broad, square, powerful forehead. Till within a month of her death her full lips were red as a girl's; the brilliant colour of her cheek was a delicate carmine, the smaller vessels still distinct with the blood that circulated through them regularly as it had done seventy years before. Doris bowed her head at last — bowed her heart, too. "I suppose I'm a dier," she said to me; "I used to think I never should die. I never thought I was the same as other folks. Nothing never did me no harm. I've known hundreds of diers—what was that to me?"

At last she got an allowance from the par-

ish — went out no more — then she took to her bed. All her life she appears to have put away from herself anything but the present hour. When she could no longer trudge about the old roads and lanes, she fiercely resented the faintest suggestion that she would be better cared for in the Union. "I never set my foot in the Union yet, and they shan't make me. I don't want no taking care of. Let 'em leave me alone. I'm best alone. Who's a-going to look after me — a-peeping and a-picking and a-sniffing about?" So we had to make the best of it.

Doris grew feebler; she found it harder and harder to fetch her pail of water from the well; she hadn't strength or spirit to wash up her things or put them away, or even light her fire. I used to drop in more frequently, though it was not always easy, for she lived a couple of miles off. The woman's heart was evidently softening, but she fought against it in impatient, defiant outbreaks. She was thinking. Clearly the memories of the past were haunting her: there were the signs not so much of weak and puling regret as of a bitter and acrimonious disgust. "Yah! I see it all now; I didn't see it then. There

ain't no one to blame but myself. Yah!" Now and then her abruptness took me at a disadvantage, when she—evidently speaking out what had been turning over and over in her mind for nights and days—would hurl at me some sad question as though it were a missile she was burning to throw from her. "What puts me out," she said one day, "is what such as you come to such as me for. You ain't got nothing to gain by it — you ain't obliged to—you ain't a-going to tell me as you like it — here you are wet and dry. What do you do it for? That there woman over the way, she wouldn't come near me if it wasn't for you. Ah! as if I don't know!" She laughed a feeble, cunning laugh and tried to look sly.

"Doris! when the old dickey was alive you used to take messages, didn't you, whether you liked it or not? Perhaps that's my way!"

"Go on wi' you! you ain't got no master, and you don't want no shillings—I did!"

"Ah! Doris! Doris! but I *have* a Master, and that's just where it is."

She looked at me, said nothing, tossed about on the bed, sat up again, then half

wearily, half petulantly, "Well, you can't like it anyhow. He never comes to see you; and if He did, possible as you could do without Him!"

* * * * *

Another time she broke out, "Mrs. Dash came here yesterday; she brought me a bit of chicken. She hadn't no call to come; she wouldn't ha' come if you hadn't sent her. I had to eat her victuals, though it kind o' choked me; she wanted 'em more'n I did, and they'd ha' done her more good!" Then she went on to say that Mrs. Dash had in the old days always been good for a sixpence, an egg, a cup of milk, or some scraps. Four years before this time her husband had "broken." Doris had called at the door some days afterwards and found her old friend in tears—the bailiffs had been in the house. Mechanically she had gone to look for something for Doris — there was nothing. "Never mind, Doris!" she had said with a wan smile, "there's twopence for you!" Doris took it, shambled off, and swore a big oath that she'd never go near that door again. "I'd have given it back, and more

too," said Doris, "but I knew her well; she wouldn't ha' liked it; but I never went there no more!"

The shadows were deepening. We got a kind neighbour to go in two or three times a day to look after Doris, and very kind and considerate she was; but Doris at first resented the intrusion. In a little while she submitted, and ended by expressing a reluctant sort of gratitude; but in the presence of this extemporised *sœur de charité* when I called she was obstinately silent. The good creature noticed it, and had the tact and delicacy always to retire when I came in to pay my visits. "I'm a dier!" said Doris. "Not just yet, though; don't you be afraid. Possible you'd write a letter for me?"

Write a letter for Doris! Whom to? Then came a strange story. Fifty years ago, when Doris had first taken up with Joe Bickers—who was then earning a great deal of money doing odd jobs of drilling and carting — Joe wanted more help. Doris thereupon went to the workhouse and took out her youngest brother, a lad of twelve or fourteen. "And I brought him up," said Doris.

The strong, affectionate nature of the lad, his strange thoughtfulness, his intelligence, his somewhat melancholy temperament, had come, you may be sure, not from Jaunty Jem, but from the other side of the house. He conceived a deep horror and loathing of the life into which he was plunged. "He couldn't a-bear the drink, and he couldn't abide my old man!" The lad grew very strong, but he was no match at all for old Joe. He sullenly submitted to the ruffian's brutal violence for three or four years; then when he found he could do no good, and that it was faring worse and worse with his sister, one day he disappeared. "He always said he should go away some day, and if he did he'd never come back. 'Come along wi' me, Doris,' he said one night afore he went off; 'I'll never marry till you do; I'll work my fingers to the bone to keep you respectable; come along and leave it all. Don't you be dragged in the mud no more'!"

But no! With the obstinate infatuation of the woman, she refused to move. She never slept a night in her life ten miles from the place of her birth. There she would live and there she would die.

* * * * *

Once, when I was in the jolly twenties, a merry band of us had been out shooting. Just as we turned homewards the sun sank down and it was twilight. Up rose a partridge: some one fired; the bird was hit. A shot, I conjecture, had passed through one of its eyes and lodged in the brain. In the waning light we saw it wheeling round us in a regular circle — round and round and round. It was getting dark as we fired one after another; but we missed. The bird flew round and round; at last one chance shot ended it all. I often think of the poor partridge; and when I do I think of Doris too, fluttering round and round and round in an enchanted circle—dropping at last!

* * * * *

I wrote that letter and the brother came. A serious, broad-shouldered, thriving miner with a vast hand that took mine into its mighty grasp while his lip quivered, and his words came slowly, "I've come to fetch Doris, but she won't go, sir. Suppose I was to take her up and carry her off in a first-class carriage. Do you think she'd stand

it? There's a train at 4.15 this afternoon." He'd been travelling all the night, fourteen hours of it. It was now mid-day. I told him the thing was not to be done—impossible. "Then I'd best get back. My wife's been paralysed. There's two shops to look after. I must get back." He stayed a few hours, amazed the *sœur de Charité* by his profuseness, left money behind him, and orders that his sister should want for nothing, and was gone; the poor wife was calling to him, and the two shops and the work he had left in the coal-pit. How he managed his various occupations who shall say? A man of few words and slow of speech, he left only one message behind him. "Give my love to his reverence. Mind, I say my love! I mean it." The 4.15 train took him back to his wife, who wrote an urgent, pleading letter to Doris. Let her come. "Oh, come to us for the love of God!" She was past railway journeyings by this time. "I knew he'd come if I sent for him," said Doris; "he was always a good sort of boy. I brought him up, and he's a good boy now!" aged sixty years or thereabouts!

You ladies and gentlemen of the leisure

classes who subscribe to Mudie's and religiously visit the Royal Academy, I have noticed a superstition among you which is rather widely prevalent. I have heard many of you express unbounded astonishment that romance, sentiment, pure nobleness, and the simple heroism of self-surrender should be found among the masses in the squalor of the alleys or of the cottage in the lane. I am inclined myself to fall into exactly the opposite superstition, and to doubt whether the before-mentioned articles are to be found anywhere *except* in the before-mentioned spots.

"Well! he's been and gone, my poor boy! There's another thing you might do for me now!" For perhaps the first and only time in her life a deep blush rose to her cheek, mantling all her brow with crimson. It was some time before she could bring it out. She recovered herself. "Are you a-going? 'Cause I'll tell you when you're a-going!" I silently took up my hat; with my hand upon the latch I paused, turning my back on her as she lay.

"Will you be so good as ask 'em in your church next Sunday . . . just to . . . all on

'em . . . just to . . . say a prayer for a bad woman as has lived as she hadn't ought to . . . ? Possible He may look in and hear 'em!" Can you guess who He was?

Of course I gave the message almost in her very words. The pathetic notice produced a profound impression. Everybody was talking about it. A wild rumour, extensively circulated and repeated in the markets, went about that Doris had confessed to being concerned in a murder committed fifty years before. The Pharisees were greatly exercised. One of them must needs go and look into the matter. "Is it true, Doris?" Some of the old fierceness of scorn came back to her. "Get out wi' you! I ain't so bad but I know this house is my own. Who wants you in here? I know all about you — you and yours, they're a mucky lot! I never done no night poaching same as you. Who are you to come in here with your horking and your snivelling? Get out wi' you!" The fellow slunk away and gave in a report to those that sent him that Doris was "a-going to hell!"

She was past caring now what people said of her; the old contempt of the world's cen-

sure helped her now. Let them — they had cause for it!

I rarely *read* anything to Doris. I used to trust to my memory for the most part, and *tell* her what I thought it was good to tell. She was sitting up in her bed huddled together, her arms clasped round her knees, on her head a *magenta* [is that the word?] handkerchief tied under her chin, faded crimson petticoat, and crimson stockings, an old blanket gathered round her shoulders. Somehow — I forget how it came about — I told her of one whom they brought to Him; how they were very hard upon her; how they could not help being hard — it would not do *not* to be hard against some sins, some wrongs, some evil-doers—how they said this and that; how He was never hard; how He was so very, very sorry for her. Doris utterly broke down. Clutching her knees, she looked at me, the wild eyes filled with the big drops that rolled down her cheeks. I never saw a human being sob before without the least attempt at stopping or hiding the spasms of emotion. I hope I shall never see it again. What did she say? What did I answer? Nay! Nay! Hush!

Next day and the next I could not go to her. Doris was very restless. "I can't ease her," said our *sœur de Charité* when I did come at last; "she keeps telling me to read to her 'about the woman,' and I don't know what woman — I've been trying ever so!" Her trying consisted in reading about the lost piece of silver, the judgment of Solomon, St. Paul's advice to wives. Finally (when all these failed to satisfy Doris) somebody dropped in who suggested the 17th chapter of the Revelation of St. John!

Doris tried to raise herself the next time she heard my voice. . . . We had our last interview. That night she died. A week or two before she had sent for Mrs. Dash. By the help of careful instructions Mrs. Dash found, in a hole in the chimney, a little hoard of seventeen shillings. It had been stored up against the day of her burial. Doris had no fears now, for her "boy" would save her from a pauper's grave; but the money was his, and he'd better have it. The brother came again, and brought his sadly crippled wife with him too. They gave away the few things that were in the house. It was with the utmost difficulty that I could make them

understand that there was no fee to pay, that they owed me nothing. They went their way, strangely sorrowing, when they had laid their sister in her grave.

And this was the end of Doris!

The Bibelot

BORN *in London in January, 1845, Mr. Eugene Lee-Hamilton has recently and almost miraculously recovered from a cerebro-spinal malady which since 1873 onwards "forced him, like Heine in his latter years, to assume the attitude of supine inactivity." It was under these painful conditions that the poet first awoke in him and he produced in rapid succession, Poems and Transcripts, 1878; Gods, Saints and Men, 1880; The New Medusa, 1882; Apollo and Marsyas, 1884; Imaginary Sonnets, 1888; The Fountain of Youth, 1891; Sonnets of the Wingless Hours, 1894.*

It may be stated without unkindly implication, that there is no good reason for abrogating the laws of sane critical estimate even when applied to such a poignant presentation of personal pain as these Sonnets of the Wingless Hours—*the last and best of seven volumes of original verse.*[1] *Some such feeling as this is necessarily evoked in turning to one of the longer estimates writ-*

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1 *He has also made a translation of Dante's Inferno, 1898, and in collaboration with his wife printed* Forest Notes, *1899.*

All Saints Academy

ten at the time by Mr. J. A. Noble.[2] *Frankly, the best work in the book is that having nothing whatever to do with the poet's "Wheeled Bed," but depending, as all great literature must depend, on imaginative qualities quite outside the question of sickness or health.*

For as Mr. J. A. Symonds clearly saw and said: "Technically, Mr. Lee-Hamilton commands a wide and picturesque vocabulary, and is not without considerable power over rhythm and metre. His language is direct, spontaneous, unrestrained. But, in diction and versification alike, he is apt, when not working under severe restraints of form, to be more careless than befits an artist in the present age. His effects suffer also,—from a want of reserve, and inattention to the advantages of compression. This accounts for the fact that he succeeds so well in the sonnet, which imposes limitations on his luxuriance."[3]

Here we have the dictum of a friendly yet impartial critic, profitably cited in this connexion as fully setting forth why we may pass without further comment from

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2 The Academy, *Sept. 1, 1894, p. 145.*

3 *See article by Symonds in Miles' Poets and Poetry of the Century, vol. viii. pp. 223-228 (London, n. d.)*

Mr. Lee-Hamilton's earlier books to the one out of which a score of his best and therefore his most enduring sonnets are taken. Suffice it to say that the poet who has poured us of his wine of thought and passion in these twenty pieces can be forgiven much immature verse; the poetic end more than justifies any and all unpoetic means taken to reach that end.

SONNETS OF THE WINGLESS HOURS
By
EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON.

WHAT THE SONNET IS.

FOURTEEN small broidered berries on the hem
  Of Circe's mantle, each of magic gold;
  Fourteen of lone Calypso's tears that roll'd
Into the sea, for pearls to come of them;

Fourteen clear signs of omen in the gem
  With which Medea human fate foretold;
  Fourteen small drops, which Faustus, growing old,
Craved of the Fiend, to water Life's dry stem.

It is the pure white diamond Dante brought
  To Beatrice; the sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought;

The ruby Shakespeare hewed from his heart's core;
  The dark, deep emerald that Rossetti wrought
For his own soul, to wear for evermore.

SONNET GOLD.

I.

We get it from Etruscan tombs, hid deep
  Beneath the passing ploughshare; or from caves
  Known but to Prospero, where pale-green waves
Have rolled the wreck-gold, which the mermaids keep;

And from the caverns, where the gnomes up-heap
  The secret treasures, which the Earth's dwarf slaves
  Coin in her bosom, till the red gold paves
Her whole great heart, where only poets peep;

Or from old missals, where the gold defies
  Time's hand, in saints' bright aureoles, and keeps,
In angels' long straight trumpets, all its flash;

But chiefly from the crucible, where lies
  The alchemist's pure dream-fold.—While he sleeps
The poet steals it, leaving him the ash.

II.

WHAT shall we make of sonnet gold for men?
The dove-wreathed cup some youth to Phryne gave?
Or dark Locusta's phial which shall have
Chiselled all round it, snakes from Horror's den?

Or that ill ring, which sank in fathoms ten,
When Faliero spoused the Venice wave?
Or Inez' funeral crown, the day the grave
Showed her for coronation, all myrrh then?

The best to make would be a hilt of gold
For Life's keen falchion, — like a dragon's head
Fierce and fantastic, massive in your hold;

But oft our goldsmith's chisel carves, instead,
A fretted shrine, for sorrows that are old
And passions that are sterile, or are dead.

THE WAIFS OF TIME.

When some great ship has long ago been wreck'd,
And the repentant waves have long since laid
Upon the beach the booty that they made,
And few remember still, and none expect,

The Sea will sometimes suddenly eject
A lonely shattered waif, still undecayed,
That tells of lives with which an old storm played,
In a carved name that graybeards recollect.

So ever and anon the soundless sea
Which we call Time, casts up upon the strand
Some tardy waif from lost antiquity:

A stained maimed god, a faun with shattered hand,
From Art's great wreck is suddenly set free,
And stands before us as immortals stand.

TO THE SO-CALLED VENUS OF MILO.

I.

[illegible] armless splendour, Victory's own breath;
Embraceless Beauty, Strength bereft of [illegible]
To [illegible] high pedestal a hundred lands
[illegible] rent to awe, and sons to stand beneath;

To whom Adonis never brought a wreath,
Nor Tannhäuser a song, but whose commands
Were blindly followed, by immortal bands
Who wooed thee at Thermopylæ in death:

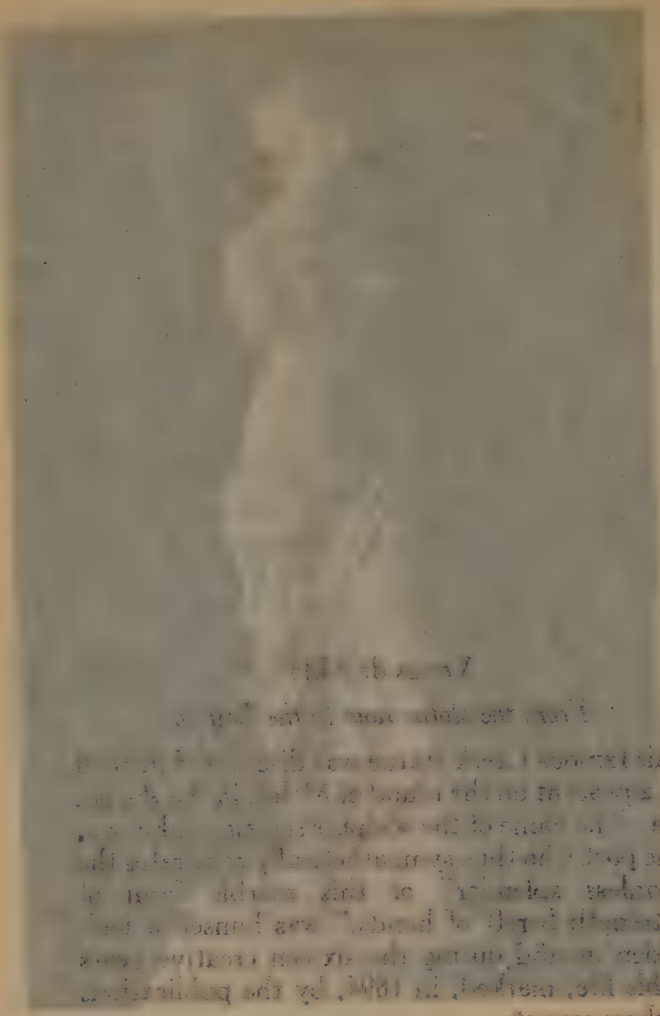
[illegible] Venus thou, but nurse [illegible] steeled
[illegible] Freedom's [illegible]
And never [illegible]

No Venus thou, [illegible] shield
Which once thy [illegible] right wrote:
'At Mara[illegible]

Venus de Milo

From the statue now in the Louvre

This famous Greek statue was discovered in 1820 by a peasant on the island of Melos, in the Ægean Sea. The name of the sculptor remains unknown. The poet who thus sympathetically celebrates the "armless splendor" of this marble form of "Strength bereft of hands," was himself a bed-ridden invalid during the sixteen creative years of his life, marked, in 1894, by the publications of these sonnets.



TO THE SO-CALLED VENUS OF MILO.

I.

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Embraceless Beauty, Strength bereft of hands;
To whose high pedestal a hundred lands
Send rent of awe, and sons to stand beneath;

To whom Adonis never brought a wreath,
Nor Tannhäuser a song, but whose commands
Were blindly followed, by immortal bands
Who wooed thee at Thermopylæ in death:

No Venus thou; but nurse of legions steeled
By Freedom's self, where rang her highest note,
And never has thy bosom felt a kiss:

No Venus thou; but on the golden shield
Which once thy lost left held, thy lost right wrote:
'At Marathon and briny Salamis.'

II.

PERHAPS thy arms are lying where they hold
The roots of some old olive, which strikes deep
In Attic earth; or where the Greek girls reap,
With echoes of the harvest hymns of old;

Or haply in some seaweed-cushioned fold
Of warm Greek seas, which shadows of ships sweep,
While prying dolphins through the green ribs peep,
Of sunken galleys filled with Persian gold.

Or were they shattered, — pounded back to lime,
To make the mortar for some Turkish tower
Which overshadowed Freedom for a time?

Or strewn as dust, to make, with sun and shower,
The grain and vine and olive of their clime,
As was the hand which wrought them in an hour?

THE RING OF FAUSTUS.

THERE is a tale of Faustus, — that one day
Lucretia the Venetian, then his love,
Had, while he slept, the rashness to remove
His magic ring, when fair as a god he lay;

And that a sudden horrible decay
O'erspread his face; a hundred wrinkles wove
Their network on his cheek; while she above
His slumber crouched, and watched him shrivel away.

There is upon Life's hand a magic ring —
The ring of Faith-in-Good, Life's gold of gold;
Remove it not, lest all Life's charm take wing;

Remove it not, lest straightway you behold
Life's cheek fall in, and every earthly thing
Grow all at once unutterably old.

SUNKEN GOLD.

In dim green depths rot ingot-laden ships;
  And gold doubloons, that from the drowned hand fell,
  Lie nestled in the ocean-flower's bell
With love's old gifts, once kissed by long-drowned lips;

And round some wrought gold cup the sea-grass whips,
  And hides lost pearls, near pearls still in their shell,
  Where sea-weed forests fill each ocean dell
And seek dim sunlight with their restless tips.

So lie the wasted gifts, the long-lost hopes
  Beneath the now hushed surface of myself,
In lonelier depths than where the diver gropes;

They lie deep, deep; but I at times behold
  In doubtful glimpses, on some reefy shelf,
The gleam of irrecoverable gold.

SEA-SHELL MURMURS

THE hollow sea-shell which for years hath stood
On dusty shelves, when held against the ear
Proclaims its stormy parent; and we hear
The faint far murmur of the breaking flood.

We hear the sea. The sea? It is the blood
In our own veins, impetuous and near,
And pulses keeping pace with hope and fear
And with our feelings' every shifting mood.

Lo, in my heart I hear, as in a shell,
The murmur of a world beyond the grave,
Distinct, distinct, though faint and far it be.

Thou fool; this echo is a cheat as well,—
The hum of earthly instincts; and we crave
A world unreal as the shell-heard sea.

WINE OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

He rode the flame-winged dragon-steed of Thought
Through Space and Darkness, seeking Heav'n and Hell;
And searched the furthest stars where souls might dwell
To find God's justice; and in vain he sought.

Then, looking on the dusk-eyed girl who brought
His dream-filled wine beside his garden well,
He said: 'Her kiss; the wine-jug's drowsy spell;
Bulbul; the roses; death; — all else is naught:

'So drink till that.' — What, drink, because the abyss
Of Nothing waits? because there is for man
But one swift hour of consciousness and light?

No. — Just because we have no life but this,
Turn it to use; be noble while you can;
Search, help, create; then pass into the night.

ROMAN BATHS.

THERE were some Roman baths where we spent hours
Immense and lonely courts of rock-like brick,
All overgrown with verdure strong and thick,
And girding sweet wild lawns all full of flowers.

One day, beneath the turf, green with the showers
Of all the centuries since Genseric,
They found rich pavements hidden by Time's trick,
Adorned with tritons, dolphins, doves like ours.

So, underneath the surface of To-day,
Lies yesterday, and what we call the Past,
The only thing which never can decay.

Things bygone are the only things that last:
The Present is mere grass, quick-mown away;
The Past is stone, and stands for ever fast.

MUSSET'S LOUIS D'OR.

ASLEEP, a little fisher-girl one day
  Lay on the shingle in an old boat's shade;
  Her skirt was tattered, and the sea-breeze played
With her brown loosened hair a ceaseless play.

A poet chanced to pass as there she lay;
  Her sun-burnt face, her tatters he surveyed;
  A golden coin between her lips he laid,
And, letting her sleep on, he went his way.

What came of that gold windfall? Did it breed
  Those long-loved coins which patient thrift can show
With proud pure smile, to meet the household need?

Or stolen gold! or those curst coins which grow
  Each year more sought, more loathed, and are the mead
Of women's loveless kisses? Who can know?

BAUDELAIRE.

A Paris gutter of the good old times,
  Black and putrescent in its stagnant bed,
  Save where the shamble oozings fringe it red,
Or scaffold trickles, or nocturnal crimes.

It holds dropped gold; dead flowers from tropic climes;
  Gems true and false, by midnight maskers shed;
  Old pots of rouge; old broken phials that spread
Vague fumes of musk, with fumes from slums and slimes.

And everywhere, as glows the set of day,
  There floats upon the winding fetid mire
The gorgeous iridescence of decay:

A wavy film of colour, gold and fire,
  Trembles all through it as you pick your way,
And streaks of purple that are straight from Tyre.

ON THE FLY-LEAF OF DANTE'S 'VITA NUOVA.'

THERE was a tall stern Exile once of old,
  Who paced Verona's streets as dusk shades fell,
  With step as measured as the vesper bell,
And face half-hidden by his hood's dark fold;

One whom the children, as he grimly stroll'd,
  Would shrink from in the fear of a vague spell,
  Crying, 'The man who has been down to Hell,'
Or hanging in his footsteps, if more bold.

This little book is not by that stern man,
  But by his younger self, such as he seems
In Giotto's fresco, holding up the flower,

Thinking of her whose hand, by Fate's strange plan,
  He never touched on earth, but who, in dreams,
Oft led him into Heaven for an hour.

FUMES OF CHARCOAL.*

September, 1889.

I.

DEATH has no shape more stealthy. — There you sit,
With all unchanged around you, in your chair,
Watching the wavy tremor of the air
Above the little brazier you have lit,

While Death begins to amorously flit
In silent circles round you, till he dare
Touch with his lips, and, crouching o'er you there,
Kiss you all black, and freeze you bit by bit.

Yet she could walk upon the bracing heath,
When steams the dew beneath the morning sun,
And draw the freshness of the mountain's breath:

Were charcoal fumes more sweet as, one by one,
Life's lights went out, beneath that kiss of Death,
And, turning black, the life-blood ceased to run?

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* See *A Minor Poet and Lyrics by Amy Levy* in *The Bibelot,* Vol. VII, pp. 231-261.

II.

If some new Dante in the shades below,
While crossing that wan wood, where the self slain,
Changed into conscious trees, soothe their dull pain
By sighs and plaints, as tears can never flow,

Should hear an English voice, like west wind low,
Come from the latest tree, and, letting strain
His ear against its trunk, should hear quite plain
The soul's heart tick within, though faint and slow:

Then let him ask: 'O Amy, in the land
Of the sweet light and of the sweet live air,
Did you ne'er sit beside a friend's wheeled bed,

That you could thus destroy, at Hell's command,
All that he envied you, and choke the fair
Young flame of life, to dwell with the wan dead?'

ON THE FLY-LEAF OF LEOPARDI'S POEMS.

THERE was a hunchback in a slavish day,
  Crushed out of shape by Heaven's iron weight,
  Who made the old Italic string vibrate
In Freedom's harp, on which few dared to play;

A Titan's soul in Æsop's cripple clay;
  A dwarf Prometheus, blasted by Jove's hate,
  Who scorned the God that held him locked in fate,
And called the world the mud in which he lay.

And mud it is; but mud which can be tilled
  To grow the wheat, the olive, and the grape,
And fill more garners than men's hands can build.

And those bare tracts, whence all would fain escape,
  Conceal, perchance, some buried urn all filled
With golden Darics stamped with a winged shape.

THE GRAVE OF OMAR KHAYYÁM.

THEY washed his body with a wine of gold,
And wrapped it round, to meet his last desire,
In leaves of vine, whose every pale green spire
Tightened about him with an amorous hold;

And then they buried him in vineyard mould,
Where vintage hymns in Summer's dusk expire,
And where great vine-roots sucked all round him fire
For fiery cups, as ages o'er him roll'd.

A lethargy creeps o'er us on this spot
Where bulbul warbles on Oblivion's brink,
And all that man should live for is forgot.

The wine-girl floats towards us with her cup;
Or is it Azrael with darker drink?
Wake up, wake up; shake free thy soul; wake up!

WAIFS OF A WORLD.

LONG ere Columbus in the breeze unfurled
His venturous sail to hunt the setting sun,
Long ere he fired his first exultant gun
Where strange canoes all round his flagship whirled,

The unsailed ocean which the west wind curled
Had born strange waifs to Europe, one by one:
Wood carved by Indian hands, and trees like none
Which men then knew, from an untrodden world

Oh for a waif from o'er that wider sea
Whose margin is the grave, and where we think
A gem-bepebbled continent may be!

But all in vain we watch upon the brink;
No waif floats up from black infinity,
Where all who venture out for ever sink.

EPILOGUE TO THESE SONNETS.

I WROUGHT them like a targe of hammered gold
On which all Troy is battling round and round;
Or Circe's cup, embossed with snakes that wound
Through buds and myrtles, fold on scaly fold;

Or like gold coins, which Lydian tombs may hold,
Stamped with winged racers, in the old red ground;
Or twined gold armlets from the funeral mound
Of some great viking, terrible of old.

I know not in what metal I have wrought;
Nor whether what I fashion will be thrust
Beneath the clods that hide forgotten thought;

But if it is of gold it will not rust;
And when the time is ripe it will be brought
Into the sun, and glitter through its dust.

The Bibelot

WITH A Dream, — *one might almost say strangely symbolizing*

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples"

of this entire series of mediæval romances, —we come to an end of William Morris's contributions to The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine for 1856. *As authoritatively set forth by Mr. Mackail*[1] *these consisted "of eight prose tales, five poems, an article on Amiens Cathedral and another on two engravings by Alfred Rethel,*[2] *and a review of Browning's recently published 'Men and Women.' The article last named is, I believe, the single instance in which Morris ever voluntarily took the* rôle *of a reviewer; and together with an article on Rossetti's volume of poems of 1870, which, much against his will, he wrote for the*

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1 *See* The Life of William Morris, By J. W. Mackail. *2 vols. 8vo. London, 1899; in particular Vol. I, pp. 91-99.*

2 *This short description of Rethel's engravings is given in* "Reprints from the Bibelot," (*IX*) *but not in* The Bibelot *itself.*

'Academy,' it represents the sum of his formal contributions to literary criticism."[3]

From time to time suitable forewords have been prefixed to each tale, essay or poem as given in The Bibelot *so that now little remains save to take leave of what has been rightly compared "in quality to Keats's 'Endymion': as rich in imagination, as irregularly gorgeous in language, as full in every vein and fibre of the sweet juices and ferment of the spring."*

One tale, "Frank's Sealed Letter," remains by us undisturbed. It is "the only one which bears internal traces of labour or effort, . . . in which for once, and with very faint success, he tried to write a story of modern life. In common with the unfinished and unpublished modern novel which he wrote many years afterwards, it gives the curious impression of some one writing about a kind of life which he only knows from books, with a strange sort of inverted antiquarianism,"—sound criticism that we do well to accept as final. From this abortive story Morris rescued the lovely

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3 *With this statement before us we may safely exclude the tale entitled "The Two Partings" and the essay on "Ruskin and the Quarterly" ascribed to Morris by Mr. Forman. See* The Books *of* William Morris, *pp. 29, 30.*

lyric "In Prison" when, two years later, he published The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems: *the story itself can serve no valid literary end by disinterring.*

"But in five other tales," excluding The Story of the Unknown Church *and* Lindenborg Pool, *"the flower of Morris's early work," as Mr. Mackail declares, "the world is one of pure romance," — stories which, as he goes on to say, "have never been reprinted." Yet even before these words went to press in London, (March, 1899),* The Hollow Land *and* Gertha's Lovers *had appeared in our pages — an exquisite romance-cycle of lost ladies of old years and knights whose swords are rust that is here brought to its triumphant close.*

"And now is all that ancient story told
Of him who won the guarded Fleece of Gold."

A Dream,
By William Morris.

A DREAM.

I DREAMED once, that four men sat by the winter fire talking and telling tales, in a house that the wind howled round.

And one of them, the eldest, said: "When I was a boy, before you came to this land, that bar of red sand rock, which makes a fall in our river, had only just been formed; for it used to stand above the river in a great cliff, tunnelled by a cave about midway between the green-growing grass and the green-flowing river; and it fell one night, when you had not yet come to this land, no, nor your fathers.

"Now, concerning this cliff, or pike rather (for it was a tall slip of rock and not part of a range), many strange tales were told; and my father used to say, that in his time many would have explored that cave, either from covetousness (expecting to find gold therein), or from that love of wonders which most young men have, but fear kept them back. Within the memory of man, however, some had entered, and, so men said, were never seen on earth again; but my father said that the tales told concerning such, very far from deterring him (then quite a youth) from the quest of this cavern, made him all the more

earnestly long to go; so that one day in his fear, my grandfather, to prevent him, stabbed him in the shoulder, so that he was obliged to keep his bed for long; and somehow he never went, and died at last without ever having seen the inside of the cavern.

"My father told me many wondrous tales about the place, whereof for a long time I have been able to remember nothing; yet, by some means or another, a certain story has grown up in my heart, which I will tell you something of: a story which no living creature ever told me, though I do not remember the time when I knew it not. Yes, I will tell you some of it, not all perhaps, but as much as I am allowed to tell."

The man stopped and pondered awhile, leaning over the fire where the flames slept under the caked coal: he was an old man, and his hair was quite white. He spoke again presently. "And I have fancied sometimes, that in some way, how I know not, I am mixed up with the strange story I am going to tell you." Again he ceased, and gazed at the fire, bending his head down till his beard touched his knees; then, rousing himself, said in a changed voice (for he had been

speaking dreamily hitherto): "That strange-looking old house that you all know, with the limes and yew-trees before it, and the double line of very old yew-trees leading up from the gateway-tower to the porch — you know how no one will live there now because it is so eerie, and how even that bold bad lord that would come there, with his turbulent followers, was driven out in shame and disgrace by invisible agency. Well, in times past there dwelt in that house an old grey man, who was lord of that estate, his only daughter, and a young man, a kind of distant cousin of the house, whom the lord had brought up from a boy, as he was the orphan of a kinsman who had fallen in combat in his quarrel. Now, as the young knight and the young lady were both beautiful and brave, and loved beauty and good things ardently, it was natural enough that they should discover as they grew up that they were in love with one another; and afterwards, as they went on loving one another, it was, alas! not unnatural that they should sometimes have half-quarrels, very few and far between indeed, and slight to lookers-on, even while they lasted, but nevertheless intensely bitter

and unhappy to the principal parties thereto. I suppose their love then, whatever it has grown to since, was not so all-absorbing as to merge all differences of opinion and feeling, for again there were such differences then. So, upon a time it happened, just when a great war had arisen, and Lawrence (for that was the knight's name) was sitting, and thinking of war, and his departure from home; sitting there in a very grave, almost a stern mood, that Ella, his betrothed, came in, gay and sprightly, in a humour that Lawrence often enough could little understand, and this time liked less than ever, yet the bare sight of her made him yearn for her full heart, which he was not to have yet; so he caught her by the hand, and tried to draw her down to him, but she let her hand lie loose in his, and did not answer the pressure in which his heart flowed to hers; then he arose and stood before her, face to face, but she drew back a little, yet he kissed her on the mouth and said, though a rising in his throat almost choked his voice, 'Ella, are you sorry I am going?' 'Yea,' she said, 'and nay, for you will shout my name among the sword-flashes, and you will fight for me.'

Before the Battle

From the painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

In painting this picture, which serves as an illustration of William Morris's "Dream" of a young knight of the Middle Ages parting from his betrothed before he goes to battle, it is of interest that Mrs. William Morris was the principal model used by Rossetti. She was in fact one of his favorite and most frequent models. The passage in the tale which the artist has chosen to visualize is the response of the betrothed to her squire-at-arms, who asks if she is sorry to have him go, and to whom she says: "I'm sad nay, for you will shout my name among the sword-flashes, and you will fight for me."

Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

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Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

'Yes,' he said, 'for love and duty, dearest.' 'For duty? ah! I think, Lawrence, if it were not for me, you would stay at home and watch the clouds, or sit under the linden trees singing dismal love ditties of your own making, dear knight: truly, if you turn out a great warrior, I too shall live in fame, for I am certainly the making of your desire to fight.' He let drop his hands from her shoulders, where he had laid them, and said, with a faint flush over his face, 'You wrong me, Ella, for, though I have never wished to fight for the mere love of fighting, and though,' (and here again he flushed a little) 'and though I am not, I well know, so free of the fear of death as a good man would be, yet for this duty's sake, which is really a higher love, Ella, love of God, I trust I would risk life, nay honour, even if not willingly, yet cheerfully at least.' 'Still duty, duty,' she said; 'you lay, Lawrence, as many people do, most stress on the point where you are weakest; moreover, those knights who in time past have done wild, mad things merely at their ladies' word, scarcely did so for duty; for they owed their lives to their country surely, to the cause of good, and should not

have risked them for a whim, and yet you praised them the other day.' 'Did I?' said Lawrence; 'well, and in a way they were much to be praised, for even blind love and obedience is well; but reasonable love, reasonable obedience is so far better as to be almost a different thing; yet, I think, if the knights did well partly, the ladies did altogether ill: for if they had faith in their lovers, and did this merely from a mad longing to see them do 'noble' deeds, then had they but little faith in God, Who can, and at His good pleasure does give time and opportunity to every man, if he will but watch for it, to serve Him with reasonable service, and gain love and all noble things in greater measure thereby: but if these ladies did as they did, that they might prove their knights, then surely did they lack faith both in God and man. I do not think that two friends even could live together on such terms but for lovers — ah! Ella, Ella, why do you look so at me? on this day, almost the last, we shall be together for long; Ella, your face is changed, your eyes — O Christ! help her and me, help her, good Lord.' 'Lawrence,' she said, speaking quickly and

in jerks, 'dare you, for my sake, sleep this night in the cavern of the red pike? for I say to you that, faithful or not, I doubt your courage.' But she was startled when she saw him, and how the fiery blood rushed up to his forehead, then sank to his heart again, and his face became as pale as the face of a dead man: he looked at her and said, 'Yes, Ella, I will go now; for what matter where I go?' He turned and moved toward the door; he was almost gone, when that evil spirit left her, and she cried out aloud, passionately, eagerly: 'Lawrence, Lawrence, come back once more, if only to strike me dead with your knightly sword.' He hesitated, wavered, turned, and in another moment she was lying in his arms weeping into his hair.

"'And yet, Ella, the spoken word, the thought of our hearts cannot be recalled, I must go, and go this night too, only promise one thing.' 'Dearest what? you are always right!' 'Love, you must promise that if I come not again by to-morrow at moonrise, you will go to the red pike, and, having entered the cavern, go where God leads you, and seek me, and never leave that quest, even

if it end not but with death.' 'Lawrence, how your heart beats! poor heart! are you afraid that I shall hesitate to promise to perform that which is the only thing I could do? I know I am not worthy to be with you, yet I must be with you in body or soul, or body and soul will die.' They sat silent, and the birds sang in the garden of lilies beyond; then said Ella again: 'Moreover, let us pray God to give us longer life, so that if our natural lives are short for the accomplishment of this quest, we may have more, yea, even many more lives.' 'He will, my Ella,' said Lawrence, 'and I think, nay, am sure that our wish will be granted; and I, too, will add a prayer, but will ask it very humbly, namely, that He will give me another chance or more to fight in His cause, another life to live instead of this failure.' 'Let us pray too that we may meet, however long the time be before our meeting,' she said; so they knelt down and prayed, hand fast locked in hand meantime; and afterwards they sat in that chamber facing the east, hard by the garden of lilies; and the sun fell from his noontide light gradually, lengthening the shadows, and when he sank below

the sky-line all the sky was faint, tender, crimson on a ground of blue; the crimson faded too, and the moon began to rise, but when her golden rim first showed over the wooded hills, Lawrence arose; they kissed one long trembling kiss, and then he went and armed himself; and their lips did not meet again after that, for such a long, long time, so many weary years; for he had said: 'Ella, watch me from the porch, but touch me not again at this time; only, when the moon shows level with the lily-heads, go into the porch and watch me from thence.'

"And he was gone; — you might have heard her heart beating while the moon very slowly rose, till it shone through the rose-covered trellises, level with the lily-heads; then she went to the porch and stood there, —

"And she saw him walking down toward the gateway tower, clad in his mailcoat, with a bright, crestless helmet on his head, and his trenchant sword newly grinded, girt to his side; and she watched him going between the yew-trees, which began to throw shadows from the shining of the harvest moon. She stood there in the porch, and

round by the corners of the eaves of it looked down towards her and the inside of the porch two serpent-dragons, carved in stone; and on their scales, and about their leering eyes, grew the yellow lichen; she shuddered as she saw them stare at her, and drew closer toward the half-open door; she, standing there, clothed in white from her throat till over her feet, altogether ungirdled; and her long yellow hair, without plait or band, fell down behind and lay along her shoulders, quietly, because the night was without wind, and she too was now standing scarcely moving a muscle.

"She gazed down the line of the yew-trees, and watched how, as he went for the most part with a firm step, he yet shrank somewhat from the shadows of the yews; his long brown hair flowing downward, swayed with him as he walked; and the golden threads interwoven with it, as the fashion was with the warriors in those days, sparkled out from among it now and then; and the faint, far-off moonlight lit up the waves of his mailcoat; he walked fast, and was disappearing in the shadows of the trees near the moat, but turned before he was quite lost

in them, and waved his ungauntletted hand; then she heard the challenge of the warder, the falling of the drawbridge, the swing of the heavy wicket-gate on its hinges; and, into the brightening lights, and deepening shadows of the moonlight he went from her sight; and she left the porch and went to the chapel, all that night praying earnestly there.

"But he came not back again all the next day, and Ella wandered about that house pale, and fretting her heart away; so when night came and the moon, she arrayed herself in that same raiment that she had worn on the night before, and went toward the river and the red pike.

"The broad moon shone right over it by the time she came to the river; the pike rose up from the other side, and she thought at first that she would have to go back again, cross over the bridge, and so get to it; but, glancing down on the river just as she turned, she saw a little boat fairly gilt and painted, and with a long slender paddle in it, lying on the water, stretching out its silken painter as the stream drew it downwards, she entered it, and taking the paddle made for the other side; the moon meanwhile

turning the eddies to silver over the dark green water: she landed beneath the shadow of that great pile of sandstone, where the grass grew green, and the flowers sprung fair right up to the foot of the bare barren rock; it was cut in many steps till it reached the cave, which was overhung by creepers and matted grass; the stream swept the boat downwards, and Ella, her heart beating so as almost to stop her breath, mounted the steps slowly, slowly. She reached at last the platform below the cave, and turning, gave a long gaze at the moonlit country; 'her last,' she said; then she moved, and the cave hid her as the water of the warm seas close over the pearl-diver.

"Just so the night before had it hidden Lawrence. And they never came back, they two: — never, the people say. I wonder what their love has grown to now; ah! they love, I know, but cannot find each other yet: I wonder also if they ever will."

So spoke Hugh the white-haired. But he who sat over against him, a soldier as it seemed, black-bearded, with wild grey eyes that his great brows hung over far; he, while the others sat still, awed by some vague

sense of spirits being very near them; this man, Giles, cried out — "Never? old Hugh, it is not so. — Speak! I cannot tell you how it happened, but I know it was not so, not so: — speak quick, Hugh! tell us all, all!"

"Wait a little, my son, wait," said Hugh; "the people indeed said they never came back again at all, but I, but I — Ah! the time is long past over." So he was silent, and sank his head on his breast, though his old thin lips moved, as if he talked softly to himself, and the light of past days flickered in his eyes.

Meanwhile Giles sat with his hands clasped finger over finger, tightly, "till the knuckles whitened;" his lips were pressed firmly together; his breast heaved as though it would burst, as though it must be rid of its secret. Suddenly he sprang up, and in a voice that was a solemn chant, began: "In full daylight, long ago, on a slumberously-wrathful, thunderous afternoon of summer;" — then across his chant ran the old man's shrill voice: "On an October day, packed close with heavy-lying mist, which was more than mere autumn-mist:"—the solemn stately chanting dropped, the shrill voice

went on; Giles sank down again, and Hugh standing there, swaying to and fro to the measured ringing of his own shrill voice, his long beard moving with him, said: —

"On such a day, warm, and stifling so that one could scarcely breathe even down by the sea-shore, I went from bed to bed in the hospital of the pest-laden city with my soothing draughts and medicines. And there went with me a holy woman, her face pale with much watching; yet I think even without those same desolate lonely watchings her face would still have been pale. She was not beautiful, her face being somewhat peevish-looking; apt, she seemed, to be made angry by trifles, and, even on her errand of mercy, she spoke roughly to those she tended:—no, she was not beautiful, yet I could not help gazing at her, for her eyes were very beautiful and looked out from her ugly face as a fair maiden might look from a grim prison between the window-bars of it.

"So, going through that hospital, I came to a bed at last, whereon lay one who had not been struck down by fever or plague, but had been smitten through the body with a sword by certain robbers, so that he had

narrowly escaped death. Huge of frame, with stern suffering face he lay there; and I came to him, and asked him of his hurt, and how he fared, while the day grew slowly toward even, in that pest-chamber looking toward the west; the sister came to him soon and knelt down by his bed-side to tend him.

"O Christ! As the sun went down on that dim misty day, the clouds and the thickly-packed mist cleared off, to let him shine on us, on that chamber of woes and bitter unpurifying tears; and the sunlight wrapped those two, the sick man and the ministering woman, shone on them — changed, changed utterly. Good Lord! How was I struck dumb, nay, almost blinded by that change; for there — yes there, while no man but I wondered; there, instead of the unloving nurse, knelt a wonderfully beautiful maiden, clothed all in white, and with long golden hair down her back. Tenderly she gazed at the wounded man, as her hands were put about his head, lifting it up from the pillow but a very little; and he no longer the grim, strong wounded man, but fair, and in the first bloom of youth; a bright polished

helmet crowned his head, a mailcoat flowed over his breast, and his hair streamed down long from his head, while from among it here and there shone out threads of gold.

"So they spake thus in a quiet tone: 'Body and soul together again, Ella, love; how long will it be now before the last time of all?' 'Long,' she said, 'but the years pass; talk no more, dearest, but let us think only, for the time is short, and our bodies call up memories, change love to better even than it was in the old time.'

"Silence so, while you might count a hundred, then with a great sigh: 'Farewell, Ella, for long,' — 'Farewell, Lawrence,' and the sun sank, all was as before.

"But I stood at the foot of the bed pondering, till the sister coming to me, said: 'Master Physician, this is no time for dreaming; act — the patients are waiting, the fell sickness grows worse in this hot close air; feel' — (and she swung open the casement), 'the outer air is no fresher than the air inside; the wind blows dead toward the west, coming from the stagnant marshes; the sea is like a stagnant pool too, you can scarce hear the sound of the long, low surge

breaking.' I turned from her and went up to the sick man, and said: 'Sir Knight, in spite of all the sickness about you, you yourself better strangely, and another month will see you with your sword girt to your side again.' 'Thanks, kind master Hugh,' he said, but impatiently, as if his mind were on other things, and he turned in his bed away from me restlessly.

"And till late that night I ministered to the sick in that hospital; but when I went away, I walked down to the sea, and paced there to and fro over the hard sand: and the moon showed bloody with the hot mist, which the sea would not take on its bosom, though the dull east wind blew it onward continually. I walked there pondering till a noise from over the sea made me turn and look that way; what was that coming over the sea? Laus Deo! the WEST WIND: Hurrah! I feel the joy I felt then over again now, in all its intensity. How came it over the sea? first, far out to sea, so that it was only just visible under the red-gleaming moonlight, far out to sea, while the mists above grew troubled, and wavered, a long level bar of white; it grew nearer quickly,

it rushed on toward me fearfully fast, it gathered form, strange, misty, intricate form — the ravelled foam of the green sea; then oh! hurrah! I was wrapped in it, — the cold salt spray — drenched with it, blinded by it, and when I could see again, I saw the great green waves rising, nodding and breaking, all coming on together; and over them from wave to wave leaped the joyous WEST WIND; and the mist and the plague clouds were sweeping back eastward in wild swirls; and right away were they swept at last, till they brooded over the face of the dismal stagnant meres, many miles away from our fair city, and there they pondered wrathfully on their defeat.

"But somehow my life changed from the time when I beheld the two lovers, and I grew old quickly." He ceased; then after a short silence said again: "And that was long ago, very long ago, I know not when it happened."

So he sank back again, and for a while no one spoke; till Giles said at last:

"Once in full daylight I saw a vision, while I was waking, while the eyes of men were upon me: long ago on the afternoon

of a thunderous summer day, I sat alone in my fair garden near the city; for on that day a mighty reward was to be given to the brave man who had saved us all, leading us so mightily in that battle a few days back; now the very queen, the lady of the land, whom all men reverenced almost as the Virgin Mother, so kind and good and beautiful she was, was to crown him with flowers and gird a sword about him; after the 'Te Deum' had been sung for the victory, and almost all the city were at that time either in the Church, or hard by it, or else were by the hill that was near the river where the crowning was to be: but I sat alone in the garden of my house as I said; sat grieving for the loss of my brave brother, who was slain by my side in that same fight.

"I sat beneath an elm tree; and as I sat and pondered on that still, windless day, I heard suddenly a breath of air rustle through the boughs of the elm. I looked up, and my heart almost stopped beating, I knew not why, as I watched the path of that breeze over the bowing lilies and the rushes by the fountain; but when I looked to the place whence the breeze had come, I became all

at once aware of an appearance that told me why my heart stopped beating. Ah! there they were, those two whom before I had but seen in dreams by night, now before my waking eyes in broad daylight. One, a knight (for so he seemed), with long hair mingled with golden threads, flowing over his mailcoat, and a bright crestless helmet on his head, his face sad-looking, but calm; and by his side, but not touching him, walked a wondrously fair maiden, clad in white, her eyelids just shadowing her blue eyes: her arms and hands seeming to float along with her as she moved on quickly, yet very softly; great rest on them both, though sorrow gleamed through it.

"When they came opposite to where I stood, these two stopped for a while, being in nowise shadowy, as I have heard men say ghosts are, but clear and distinct. They stopped close by me, as I stood motionless, unable to pray; they turned to each other, face to face, and the maiden said, 'Love, for this our last true meeting before the end of all, we need a witness; let this man, softened by sorrow, even as we are, go with us.'

"I never heard such music as her words

were! though I used to wonder when I was young whether the angels in heaven sung better than the choristers sang in our church, and though, even then the sound of the triumphant hymn came up to me in a breath of wind, and floated round me, making dreams, in that moment of awe and great dread, of the old long-past days in that old church, of her who lay under the pavement of it; whose sweet voice once, once long ago, once only to me — yet I shall see her again." He became silent as he said this, and no man cared to break in upon his thoughts, seeing the choking movement in his throat, the fierce clenching of hand and foot, the stiffening of the muscles all over him; but soon, with an upward jerk of his head, he threw back the long elf locks that had fallen over his eyes while his head was bent down, and went on as before:

"The knight passed his hand across his brow, as if to clear away some mist that had gathered there, and said, in a deep murmurous voice, 'Why the last time, dearest, why the last time? Know you not how long a time remains yet? the old man came last night to the ivory house and told me it

would be a hundred years, ay, more, before the happy end.' 'So long,' she said; 'so long; ah! love, what things words are; yet this is the last time; alas! alas! for the weary years! my words, my sin!' 'O love, it is very terrible,' he said; 'I could almost weep, old though I am, and grown cold with dwelling in the ivory house: O, Ella, if you only knew how cold it is there, in the starry nights when the north wind is stirring; and there is no fair colour there, nought but the white ivory, with one narrow line of gleaming gold over every window, and a fathom's-breadth of burnished gold behind the throne. Ella, it was scarce well done of you to send me to the ivory house.' 'Is it so cold, love?' she said, 'I knew it not; forgive me! but as to the matter of a witness, some one we must have, and why not this man?' 'Rather old Hugh,' he said, 'or Cuthbert, his father; they have both been witnesses before.' 'Cuthbert,' said the maiden, solemnly, 'has been dead twenty years; Hugh died last night.'" (Now, as Giles said these words, carelessly, as though not heeding them particularly, a cold sickening shudder ran through the other two men, but he noted

it not and went on.) "'This man then be it,' said the knight, and therewith they turned again, and moved on side by side as before; nor said they any word to me, and yet I could not help following them, and we three moved on together, and soon I saw that my nature was changed, and that I was invisible for the time; for, though the sun was high, I cast no shadow, neither did any man that we past notice us, as we made toward the hill by the riverside.

"And by the time we came there the queen was sitting at the top of it, under a throne of purple and gold, with a great band of knights gloriously armed on either side of her; and their many banners floated over them. Then I felt that those two had left me, and that my own right visible nature was returned; yet still did I feel strange, and as if I belonged not wholly to this earth. And I heard one say, in a low voice to his fellow, 'See, Sir Giles is here after all; yet, how came he here, and why is he not in armour among the noble knights yonder, he who fought so well? how wild he looks too!' 'Poor knight,' said the other, 'he is distraught with the loss of his brother; let him

be; and see, here comes the noble stranger knight, our deliverer.' As he spoke, we heard a great sound of trumpets, and therewithal a long line of knights on foot wound up the hill towards the throne, and the queen rose up, and the people shouted; and, at the end of all the procession went slowly and majestically the stranger knight; a man of noble presence he was, calm, and graceful to look on; grandly he went amid the gleaming of their golden armour; himself clad in the rent mail and tattered surcoat he had worn on the battle-day; bare-headed, too; for, in that fierce fight, in the thickest of it, just where he rallied our men, one smote off his helmet, and another, coming from behind, would have slain him, but that my lance bit into his breast.

"So, when they had come within some twenty paces of the throne, the rest halted, and he went up by himself toward the queen; and she, taking the golden hilted sword in her left hand, with her right caught him by the wrist, when he would have knelt to her, and held him so, tremblingly, and cried out, 'No, no, thou noblest of all knights, kneel not to me; have we not heard of thee

even before thou camest hither? how many widows bless thee, how many orphans pray for thee, how many happy ones that would be widows and orphans but for thee, sing to their children, sing to their sisters, of thy flashing sword, and the heart that guides it! And now, O noble one! thou hast done the very noblest deed of all, for thou hast kept grown men from weeping shameful tears! Oh truly! the greatest I can do for thee is very little: yet, see this sword, golden-hilted, and the stones flash out from it,' (then she hung it round him) 'and see this wreath of lilies and roses for thy head; lilies no whiter than thy pure heart, roses no tenderer than thy true love; and here, before all these my subjects, I fold thee, noblest, in my arms, so, so.' Ay, truly it was strange enough! those two were together again; not the queen and the stranger knight, but the young-seeming knight and the maiden I had seen in the garden. To my eyes they clung together there; though they say, that to the eyes of all else, it was but for a moment that the queen held both his hands in hers; to me also, amid the shouting of the multitude, came an under current of happy song: 'Oh!

truly, very truly, my noblest, a hundred years will not be long after this.' 'Hush! Ella, dearest, for talking makes the time speed; think only.'

"Pressed close to each other, as I saw it, their bosoms heaved — but I looked away — alas! when I looked again, I saw nought but the stately stranger knight, descending, hand in hand, with the queen, flushed with joy and triumph, and the people scattering flowers before them.

"And that was long ago, very long ago." So he ceased; then Osric, one of the two younger men, who had been sitting in awe-struck silence all this time, said, with eyes that dared not meet Giles's, in a terrified half whisper, as though he meant not to speak, "How long?" Giles turned round and looked him full in the face, till he dragged his eyes up to his own, then said, "More than a hundred years ago."

"So they all sat silent, listening to the roar of the south-west wind; and it blew the windows so, that they rocked in their frames.

"Then suddenly, as they sat thus, came a knock at the door of the house; so Hugh

bowed his head to Osric, to signify that he should go and open the door; so he arose, trembling, and went.

"And as he opened the door the wind blew hard against him, and blew something white against his face, then blew it away again, and his face was blanched, even to his lips; but he plucking up heart of grace, looked out, and there he saw, standing with her face upturned in speech to him, a wonderfully beautiful woman, clothed from her throat till over her feet in long white raiment, ungirt, unbroidered, and with a long veil, that was thrown off from her face, and hung from her head, streaming out in the blast of the wind; which veil was what had struck against his face: beneath her veil her golden hair streamed out too, and with the veil, so that it touched his face now and then. She was very fair, but she did not look young either, because of her statue-like features. She spoke to him slowly and queenly; 'I pray you give me shelter in your house for an hour, that I may rest, and so go on my journey again.' He was too much terrified to answer in words, and so only bowed his head; and she swept past him in stately

wise to the room where the others sat, and he followed her, trembling.

"A cold shiver ran through the other men when she entered and bowed low to them, and they turned deadly pale, but dared not move; and there she sat while they gazed at her, sitting there and wondering at her beauty, which seemed to grow every minute; though she was plainly not young, oh no, but rather very, very old, who could say how old? there she sat, and her long, long hair swept down in one curve from her head, and just touched the floor. Her face had the tokens of a deep sorrow on it, ah! a mighty sorrow, yet not so mighty as that it might mar her ineffable loveliness; that sorrow-mark seemed to gather too, and at last the gloriously-slow music of her words flowed from her lips: 'Friends, has one with the appearance of a youth come here lately; one with long brown hair, interwoven with threads of gold, flowing down from out of his polished steel helmet; with dark blue eyes and high white forehead, and mailcoat over his breast, where the light and shadow lie in waves as he moves; have you seen such an one, very beautiful?'

"Then withal as they shook their heads fearfully in answer, a great sigh rose up from her heart, and she said: 'Then must I go away again presently, and yet I thought it was the last night of all.'

"And so she sat awhile with her head resting on her hand; after, she arose as if about to go, and turned her glorious head round to thank the master of the house; and they, strangely enough, though they were terrified at her presence, were yet grieved when they saw that she was going.

"Just then the wind rose higher than ever before, yet through the roar of it they could all hear plainly a knocking at the door again; so the lady stopped when she heard it, and, turning, looked full in the face of Herman the youngest, who thereupon, being constrained by that look, rose and went to the door; and as before with Osric, so now the wind blew strong against him; and it blew into his face, so as to blind him, tresses of soft brown hair mingled with glittering threads of gold; and blinded so, he heard some one ask him musically, solemnly, if a lady with golden hair and white raiment was in that house; so Herman, not answering in

words, because of his awe and fear, merely bowed his head; then he was 'ware of some one in bright armour passing him, for the gleam of it was all about him, for as yet he could not see clearly, being blinded by the hair that had floated about him.

"But presently he followed him into the room, and there stood such an one as the lady had described; the wavering flame of the light gleamed from his polished helmet, touched the golden threads that mingled with his hair, ran along the rings of his mail.

"They stood opposite to each other for a little, he and the lady, as if they were somewhat shy of each other after their parting of a hundred years, in spite of the love which they had for each other: at last he made one step, and took off his gleaming helmet, laid it down softly, then spread abroad his arms, and she came to him, and they were clasped together, her head lying over his shoulder; and the four men gazed, quite awe-struck.

"And as they gazed, the bells of the church began to ring, for it was New-Year's-eve; and still they clung together, and the bells rang on, and the old year died.

"And there beneath the eyes of those four men the lovers slowly faded away into a heap of snow-white ashes. Then the four men kneeled down and prayed, and the next day they went to the priest, and told him all that had happened.

"So the people took those ashes and buried them in their church, in a marble tomb, and above it they caused to be carved their figures lying with clasped hands; and on the sides of it the history of the cave in the red pike.

"And in my dream I saw the moon shining on the tomb, throwing fair colours on it from the painted glass; till a sound of music rose, deepened, and fainted; then I woke."

"No memory labours longer from the deep
  Gold mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
  To gather and tell o'er
Each little sound and sight."

The Bibelot

'Old houses have old histories,'—involuntarily one recalls with what exquisite sentiment of association Pater wove the tissue of his earliest Imaginary Portrait about the child Florian Deleal in 'the old house' that conceivably was his own childhood's home,—old histories which abide when the men and women of 'gigues, gavottes and minuets' have gone into the night that waits us one and all!

It is in dealing with this intensest of modern moods, these 'fallings from us, vanishings,' that Vernon Lee[1] *comes near*

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1 *This, as is well known, is the pseudonyme adopted by Miss Violet Paget whose only published portrait is from the sketch by John S. Sargent in* The Studio *for March, 1900. The list of her works is a fairly long and very fascinating one: 1. Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy, 1880. 2. The Prince of the Hundred Soups: A Puppet-Show in Narrative (translated from the German), 1882. 3. Belcaro: being Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions, 1882. 4. Ottilie: an Eighteenth Century Idyl, 1883. 5. Euphorion: being Studies of the Antique and Mediæval in the Renaissance (2 vols.), 1884. 6. The Countess of Albany ("Eminent Women Series"), 1884. 7. Miss Brown: a Novel (3 vols.), 1884. 8. Baldwin: being Dialogues on Views and Aspirations,*

to uttering the final word. An illusive almost intangible sentiment it dominates her two latest books.[2]

True, in the last analysis the Past with its secret doors admitting to dusty chambers may hold disillusion—'how trumpery, flat, stale and unprofitable' it all is,—and yet, we cannot rid ourselves of its undying pathos. For it once was! "*Ah! those faces of heavenly fairness peering out of the gloom, those rose-lips, those shining eyes of fire, those thickly meshed braids of gold hair, those soft caressing tones—all lost—all fled—all gone!* 'Qui sait où s'en vont les roses?'"

1886. 9. The Phantom Lover: a Fantastic Story, (Reprinted in Hauntings under the title of Oke of Okehurst), 1886. 10. Juvenila: being a Second Series of Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions (2 vols.), 1887. 11. Hauntings: Fantastic Stories, 1890. 12. Vanitas: Polite Stories, 1892. 13. Althea: a Second Book of Dialogues on Aspirations and Duties, 1894. 14. Renaissance Fancies and Studies, 1899. 15. Limbo and Other Essays, 1897. 16. Genius Loci: Notes on Places, 1899.

2 *The earlier volume,* Limbo and other Essays, *already drawn upon in* The Bibelot (*Vol. VI, pp. 365-396*), *also contains* In Praise of Old Houses, *while in* Genius Loci *the note of romanticism is deepened and broadened out by travel. See also* The Bibelot (*Vol. II, pp. 39-50*) The Immortality of the Maestro Galuppi, *an essay taken from Juvenilia (1887).*

Enter then, O wayfarers and gleaners after Time, slow moving along the path of old romance, 'the gate that leads to nowhere!' As it swings on disused, rusty hinges ye may rediscover memory-haunted mansions and find foothold in forgotten flowerful closes that for a century at least have ceased to blossom and to fade.

"All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep."

In Praise of Old Houses
By
Vernon Lee.

IN PRAISE OF OLD HOUSES

I

My Yorkshire friend was saying that she hated being in an old house. *There seemed to be other* people in it besides the living. . . .

These words, expressing the very reverse of what I feel, have set me musing on my foolish passion for the Past. The Past, but the real one; not the Past considered as a possible Present. For though I should like to have seen ancient Athens, or Carthage according to Salambô, and though I have pined to hear the singers of last century, I know that any other period than this of the world's history would be detestable to live in. For one thing — one among other instances of brutish dulness — our ancestors knew nothing of the emotion of the past, the rapture of old towns and houses.

This emotion, at times this rapture, depends upon a number of mingled causes; its origin is complex and subtle, like that of all things exquisite; the flavour of certain dishes, the feel of sea or mountain air, in which chemical peculiarities and circumstances of temperature join with a hundred

trifles, seaweed, herbs, tar, heather and so forth; and like, more particularly, music and poetry, whose essence is so difficult of ascertaining. And in this case, the causes that first occur to our mind merely suggest a number more. Of these there is a principal one, only just less important than that suggested by my Yorkshire friend, which might be summed up thus: *That the action of time makes man's works into natural objects.*

Now, with no disrespect to man, 'tis certain Nature can do more than he. Not that she is the more intelligent of the two; on the contrary, she often makes the grossest artistic blunders, and has, for instance, a woeful lack of design in England, and a perfect mania for obvious composition and deliberate picturesqueness in Italy and Argyllshire. But Nature is greater than man because she is bigger, and can do more things at a time. Man seems unable to attend to one point without neglecting some other; where he has a fine fancy in melody, his harmony is apt to be threadbare; if he succeeds with colour, he cannot manage line, and if light and shade, then neither; and it is a circumstance worthy of remark

that whenever and wherever man has built beautiful temples, churches, and palaces, he has been impelled to bedizen them with primary colours, of which, in Venice and the Alhambra, time at last made something agreeable, and time also, in Greece, has judged best to obliterate every odious trace. Hence, in the works of man there is always a tendency to simplify, to suppress detail, to make things clear and explain patterns and points of view; to save trouble, thought, and material; to be symmetrical, which means, after all, to repeat the same thing twice over; he knows it is wrong to carve one frieze on the top of the other, and to paint in more than one layer of paint. Of all such restrictions Nature is superbly unconscious. She smears weather-stain on weather-stain and lichen on lichen, never stopping to match them. She jags off corners and edges, and of one meagre line makes fifty curves and facets. She weaves pattern over pattern, regardless of confusion, so that the mangiest hedgerow is richer, more subtle than all the carpets and papers ever designed by Mr. Morris. Her one notion is *More, always more;* whereas that of man, less likely to

exceed, is a timid *Enough*. No wonder, for has she not the chemistry of soil and sun and moisture and wind and frost, all at her beck and call?

Be it as it may, Nature does more for us than man, in the way of pleasure and interest. And to say, therefore, that time turns the works of man into natural objects is, therefore, saying that time gives them infinitely more variety and charm. In making them natural objects also time gives to man's lifeless productions the chief quality of everything belonging to Nature — life. Compare a freshly plastered wall with one that has been exposed to sun and rain, or a newly slated roof to one all covered with crumbling, grey, feathery stuff, like those of the Genoese villages, which look as if they had been thatched with olive-leaves from off their hills. 'Tis the comparison between life and death; or, rather, since death includes change, between something and nothing. Imagine a tree as regular as a column, or an apple as round as a door-knob!

II

So much for the material improvements which time effects in our surroundings. We now come to the spiritual advantages of dealing with the past instead of the present.

These begin in our earliest boy- or girl-hood. What right-minded child of ten or twelve cares, beyond its tribute of apples, and jam, and cricket, and guinea-pigs, for so dull a thing as the present? Why, the present is like this schoolroom or playground, compared with Polar Seas, Rocky Mountains, or Pacific Islands; a place for the body, not for the soul. It all came back to me, a little while ago, when doing up for my young friend, L. V., sundry Roman coins long mislaid in a trunk, and which had formed my happiness at his age. Delightful things! — smooth and bright green like certain cabbage-leaves, or of a sorry brown, rough with rust and verdigris; but all leaving alike a perceptible portion of themselves in the paper bag, a delectable smell of copper on one's hands. How often had I turned you round and round betwixt finger and thumb, trying to catch the slant of an inscription, or to get, in some special light, the film of effaced effigy—

the chin of Nero, or the undulating, benevolent nose of Marcus Aurelius? How often have my hands not anointed you with every conceivable mixture of oil, varnish, and gum, rubbing you gently with silk and wool, and kid gloves, in hopes that something ineffable might rise up on your surface! I quite sympathised with my young friend when, having waggled and chortled over each of them several times, he thought it necessary to overcome the natural manly horror for kissing, and shook my hand twice, thrice, and then once more, returning from the door . . . For had they not concentrated in their interesting verdigrised, brass-smelling smallness something, to me, of the glory and wonder of Rome? Cæcilia Metella, the Grotto of Egeria — a vague vision, through some twenty years' fog, of a drive between budding hedges and dry reeds; a walk across short anemone-starred turf; but turning into distinct remembrance of the buying of two old pennies, one of Augustus, the other even more interesting, owing to entire obliteration of both reverse and obverse; a valuable coin, undoubtedly. And the Baths of Caracalla, which I can recollect with the thick

the chin of Nero, or the undulating, benevolent nose of Marcus Aurelius? How often have my hands not anointed you with every conceivable mixture of oil, varnish, and gum, rubbing you softly with silk and wool, and kid gloves [illegible] that something ineffable might rise up [illegible] your surface! I quite sympathized with my young friend when, having wangled and chortled over each of them several times, he thought it necessary to overcome the natural manly horror for kissing, and shook my hand twice, thrice, and then once more, returning from the door.

For had they not concentrated in their interest [illegible] smallness of Rome?

The Baths of Caracalla

From the etching by Piranesi

Piranesi left about two thousand plates, including the masterly series dealing with ancient Roman objects, such as the celebrated baths designed by the Roman Emperor, Caracalla. Supplied with water by the Marcian aqueduct, and one-quarter mile square, they accommodated several thousand guests at one time. Sixteen hundred marble seats were provided for bathers. This etching, made during the early eighteenth-century excavations, gives an idea of the splendor of the Thermæ Caracallæ, as the baths were known to the Caesars.

brushwood, oak scrub, ivy and lentisk, and even baby ilexes, covering the masonry and overhanging the arches, and with rose hedges just cut away to dig out some huge porphyry pillar — were not their charms all concentrated in dim, delicious hopes of finding, just where the green turf ended and the undulating expanse of purple, green and white tessellated pavement began, some other brazen penny? And then, in Switzerland, soon after, did I not suffer acutely, as I cleaned my coins, from the knowledge that in this barbarous Northern place, which the Romans had, perhaps, never come near, it was quite useless to keep one's eyes on the ruts of roads and the gravel of paths, and consequently almost useless to go out, or to exist; until one day I learnt that a certain old lawyer, in a certain field, had actually dug up Roman antiquities . . . I don't know whether I ever saw them with corporeal eyes, but certainly with those of the spirit; and I was lent a drawing of one of them, a gold armlet, of which I insisted on having a copy made, and sticking it up in my room.

It does but little honour to our greatest living philosopher that he, whom children

will bless for free permission to bruise, burn, and cut their bodies, and empty the sugar-bowl and jam-pot, should wish to deprive the coming generation of all historical knowledge, of so much joy therefore, and let me add, of so much education. For do not tell me that it is not education, and of the best, to enable a child to feel the passion and poetry of life; to live, while it trudges along the dull familiar streets, in company with dull, familiar, and often stolidly incurious grown-up folk, in that terrible, magnificent past, in dungeons and palaces, loving and worshipping Joan of Arc, execrating Bloody Mary, dreaming strange impossible possibilities of what we would of said and done for Marie Antoinette — said to her, *her* actually coming towards us, by some stroke of magic, in that advancing carriage! There is enough in afterlife, God knows, to teach us *not to be heroic;* 'tis just as well that, as children, we learn a lingering liking for the quality; 'tis as important, perhaps, as learning that our tissues consume carbon, if they do so. I can speak very fervently of the enormous value for happiness of such an historical habit of mind.

Such a habit transcends altogether, in its power of filling one's life, the merely artistic and literary habit. For, after all, painting, architecture, music, poetry are things which touch us in a very intermittent way. I would compare this historic habit rather to the capacity of deriving pleasure from nature, not merely through the eye, but through all the senses; and largely, doubtless, through those obscure preceptions which make certain kinds of weather, air, &c., an actual tonic, nay food, for the body. To this alone would I place my *historical habit* in the second rank. For, as the sensitiveness to nature means supplementing our physical life by the life of the air and the sun, the clouds and waters, so does this historic habit mean supplementing our present life by a life in the past; a life larger, richer than our own, multiplying our emotions by those of the dead. . . .

I am no longer speaking of our passions for Joan of Arc and Marie Antoinette, which disappear with our childhood; I am speaking of a peculiar sense, ineffable, indescribable, but which every one knows again who has once had it, and which to many of us

has grown into a cherished habit — the sense of being companioned by the past, of being in a place warmed for our living by the lives of others. To me, as I started with saying, the reverse of this is almost painful; and I know few things more odious than the chilly, draughty, emptiness of a place without a history. For this reason America, save what may remain of Hawthorne's New England and Irving's New York, never tempts my vagabond fancy. Nature can scarcely afford beauty wherewith to compensate for living in block-tin shanties or brand new palaces. How different if we find ourselves in some city, nay village, rendered habitable for our soul by the previous dwelling therein of others, of souls. Here the streets are never empty; and, surrounded by that faceless crowd of ghosts, one feels a right to walk about, being invited by them, instead of rushing along on one's errands among a throng of other wretched living creatures who are blocked by us and block us in their turn.

How convey this sense? I do not mean that if I walk through old Paris or through Rome my thoughts revolve on Louis XI. or Julius Cæsar. Nothing could be further

from the fact. Indeed the charm of the thing is that one feels oneself accompanied not by this or that magnifico of the past (whom of course one would never have been introduced to), but by a crowd of nameless creatures; the daily life, common joy, suffering, heroism of the past. Nay, there is something more subtle than this: the whole place (how shall I explain it?) becomes a sort of living something. Thus, when I hurry (for one must needs hurry through Venetian narrowness) between the pink and lilac houses, with faded shutters and here and there a shred of tracery; now turning a sharp corner before the locksmith's or the chestnut-roaster's; now hearing my steps lonely between high walls broken by a Gothic doorway; now crossing some smooth-paved little square with its sculptured well and balconied palaces, I feel, I say, walking day after day through these streets, that I am in contact with a whole living, breathing thing, full of habits of life, of suppressed words; a sort of odd, mysterious mythical but very real creature; as if, in the dark, I stretched out my hand and met something (but without any fear), something absolutely

indefinable in shape and kind, but warm, alive. This changes solitude in unknown places into the reverse of solitude and strangeness. I remember walking thus along the bastions under the bishop's palace at Laon, the great stone cows peering down from the belfry above, with a sense of inexpressible familiarity and peace. And, strange to say, this historic habit makes us familiar also with places where we have never been. How well, for instance, do I not know Dinant and Bouvines, rival cities on the Meuse (topography and detail equally fantastic); and how I sometimes long, as with home-sickness, for a scramble among the stones and grass and chandelier-like asphodels of Agrigentum, Veii, Collatium! Why, to one minded like myself, a map, and even the names of stations in a time-table, are full of possible delight.

And sometimes it rises to rapture. This time, eight years ago, I was fretting my soul away, ill, exiled away from home, forbidden all work, in the south of Spain. At Grenada for three dreary weeks it rained without ceasing, till the hill of the Alhambra became filled with the babbling of streams, and the

town was almost cut off by a sea of mud. Between the showers one rushed up into the damp gardens of the Generalife, or into the Alhambra, to be imprisoned for hours in its desolate halls, while the rain splashed down into the courts. My sitting-room had five doors, four of glass; and the snow lay thick on the mountains. My few books had been read long ago; there remained to spell through a Spanish tome on the rebellion of the Alpujarras, whose Moorish leader, having committed every crime, finally went to heaven for spitting on the Koran on his death-bed. Letters from home were perpetually lost, or took a week to come. It seemed as if the world had quite unlearned every single trick that had ever given me pleasure. Yet, in these dreary weeks, there was one happy morning.

It was the anniversary, worse luck to it, of the Conquest of Grenada from the Moors. We got seats in the chapel of the Catholic kings, and watched a gentleman in a high hat (which he kept on in church) and swallow tails, carry the banner of Castille and Aragon, in the presence of the archbishop and chapter, some mediæval pages, two

trumpeters with pigtails, and an array of soldiers. A paltry ceremony enough. But before it began, and while mass was still going on, there came to me for a few brief moments that happiness unknown for so many, many months, that beloved historic emotion.

My eyes were wandering round the chapel, up the sheaves of the pilasters to the gilded spandrils, round the altars covered with gibbering sculpture, and down again among the crowd kneeling on the matted floor—women in veils, men with scarlet cloak-lining over the shoulder, here and there the shaven head and pigtail of the bull-ring. In the middle of it all, on their marble beds, lay the effigies of Ferdinand and Isabella, with folded hands and rigid feet, four crimson banners of the Moors overhead. The crowd was pouring in from the cathedral, and bevies of priests, and scarlet choir-boys led by their fiddler. The organ, above the chants, was running through vague mazes. I felt it approaching and stealing over me, that curious emotion felt before in such different places: walking up and down, one day, in the church of Lamballe in Brittany; seated, another time, in

the porch at Ely. And then it possessed me completely, raising me into a sort of beatitude. This kind of rapture is not easy to describe. No rare feeling is. But I would warn you from thinking that in such solemn moments there sweeps across the brain a paltry pageant, a Lord Mayor's Show of bygone things, like the cavalcades of future heroes who descend from frescoed or sculptured wall at the bidding of Ariosto's wizards and Spenser's fairies. This is something infinitely more potent and subtle; and like all strong intellectual emotions, it is compounded of many and various elements, and has its origin far down in mysterious depths of our nature; and it arises overwhelmingly from many springs, filling us with the throb of vague passions welling from our most vital parts. There is in it no possession of any definite portion of bygone times; but a yearning expectancy, a sense of the near presence, as it were, of the past; or, rather, of a sudden capacity in ourselves of apprehending the past which looms all round.

For a few moments thus, in that chapel before the tombs of the Catholic kings; in

the churches of Bruges and Innsbruck at the same time (for such emotion gives strange possibilities of simultaneous presence in various places); with the gold pomegranate flower of the badges, and crimson tassels of the Moorish standards before my eyes; also the iron knights who watch round Maximilian's grave — for a moment while the priests were chanting and the organs quavering, the life of to-day seemed to reel and vanish, and my mind to be swept along the dark and gleaming whirlpools of the past. . . .

III

CATHOLIC kings, Moorish banners, wrought-iron statues of paladins; these are great things, and not at all what I had intended to speak of when I set out to explain why old houses, which give my Yorkshire friend the creeps, seem to my feelings so far more peaceful and familiar.

Yes, it is just because the past is somehow more companionable, warmer, more full of flavour, than the present, that I love all old houses; but best of all such as are solitary in the country, isolated both from new surroundings, and from such alterations as contact with the world's hurry almost always brings. It certainly is no question of beauty. The houses along Chelsea embankment are more beautiful, and some of them a great deal more picturesques than that Worcestershire rectory, to which I always long to return: the long brick house on its terraced river-bank, the overladen plum-trees on one side, and the funereally prosperous churchyard yews on the other; and with corridors and staircases hung with stained, frameless Bolognese nakedness, Judgments of Paris, Venuses, Carità Romanas, shipped over

cheap by some bear-leading parson-tutor of the eighteenth century. Nor are they architectural, those brick and timber cottages all round, sinking (one might think) into the rich, damp soil. But they have a mellowness corresponding to that of the warm, wet, fruitful land, and due to the untroubled, warm brooding over by the past. And what is architecture to that? As to these Italian ones, which my soul loveth most, they have even less of what you would call beauty; at most such grace of projecting window-grating or buttressed side as the South gives its buildings; and such colour, or rather discolouring, as a comparatively small number of years will bring.

It kept revolving in my mind, this question of old houses and their charm, as I was sitting waiting for a tram one afternoon, in the church-porch of Pieve a Ripoli, a hamlet about two miles outside the south-east gate of Florence. That church-porch is like the baldacchino over certain Roman high altars, or, more humbly, like a very large fourpost bedstead. On the one hand was a hillside of purple and brown scrub and dark cypresses fringed against the moist, moving grey sky;

on the other, some old, bare, mulberry-trees, a hedge of russet sloe, closing in wintry fields; and, more particularly, next the porch, an insignificant house, with blistered green shutters at irregular intervals in the stained whitewash, a big green door, and a little coat-of-arms — the three Strozzi halfmoons — clapped on to the sharp corner. I sat there, among the tombstones of the porch, and wondered why I loved this house: and why it would remain, as I knew it must, a landmark in my memory. Yes, the charm must lie in the knowledge of the many creatures who have lived in this house, the many things that have been done and felt.

The creatures who have lived here, the things which have been felt and done. . . . But those things felt and done, were they not mainly trivial, base; at best nowise uncommon, and such as must be going on in every new house all around? People worked and shirked their work, endured, fretted, suffered somewhat, and amused themselves a little; were loving, unkind, neglected and neglectful, and died, some too soon, some too late. That is human life, and as such doubtless important. But all that goes on

to-day just the same; and there is no reason why that former life should have been more interesting than that these people, Argenta Cavallesi and Vincenzio Grazzini, buried at my feet, should have had bigger or better made souls and bodies than I or my friends. Indeed, in sundry ways, and owing to the narrowness of life and thought, the calmer acceptance of coarse or cruel things, I incline to think that there they were less interesting, those men and women of the past, whose rustling dresses fill old houses with fantastic sounds. They had, some few of them, their great art, great aims, feelings, struggles; but the majority were of the earth, and intolerably earthy. 'Tis their clothes' ghosts that haunt us, not their own.

So why should the past be charming? Perhaps merely because of its being the one free place for our imagination. For, as to the future, it is either empty or filled only with the cast shadows of ourselves and our various machineries. The past is the unreal and the yet visible; it has the fascination of the distant hills, the valleys seen from above; the unreal, but the unreal whose unreality, unlike that of the unreal things with which

we cram the present, can never be forced on us. *There is more behind; there may be anything.* This sense which makes us in love with all intricacies of things and feelings, roads which turn, views behind views, trees behind trees, makes the past so rich in possibilities. . . . An ordinary looking priest passes by, rings at the door of the presbytery, and enters. Those who lived there, in that old stained house with the Strozzi escutcheon, opposite the five bare mulberry-trees, were doubtless as like as may be to this man who lives there in the present. Quite true; and yet there creeps up the sense that *they* lived in the past.

For there is no end to the deceits of the past; we protest that we know it is cozening us, and it continues to cozen us just as much. Reading over Browning's *Galuppi* lately, it struck me that this dead world of vanity was no more charming or poetical than the one we live in, when it also was alive; and that those ladies, Mrs. X., Countess Y., and Lady Z., of whose *toilettes* at last night's ball that old gossip P—— had been giving us details throughout dinner, will in their turn, if any one care, be just as charm-

ing, as dainty, and elegiac as those other women who sat by while Galuppi "played toccatas stately at the clavichord." Their dresses, should they hang for a century or so, will emit a perfume as frail, and sad, and heady; their wardrobe filled with such dust as makes tears come into one's eyes, from no mechanical reason.

"Was a lady *such* a lady?" They will say that of ours also. And, in recognising this, we recognise how trumpery, flat, stale and unprofitable were those ladies of the past. It is not they who make the past charming, but the past that makes them. Time has wonderful cosmetics for its favoured ones; and if it brings white hairs and wrinkles to the realities, how much does it not heighten the bloom, brighten the eyes and hair of those who survive in our imagination!

And thus, somewhat irrelevantly, concludes my chapters in praise of old houses.

The Bibelot

THE *address we here reprint entire was published by Mr. T. J. Cobden-Sanderson and Mr. Emery Walker at The Doves Press, London, April 24, 1901. If along with the two other and earlier booklets printed by these gentlemen it has the appearance of being issued for the exclusive benefit of a few wealthy bibliophiles, it is redeemed by its subject matter, which appeals to a far wider* clientèle.

As the writer of the only complete biography of William Morris, Mr. J. W. Mackail is entitled to speak with authority. And in this more rapid survey of the man we seem to come very near to the heart of him: the real Morris to whose wonderful gifts as a great poet were added the skill of the untiring artificer, who in all things thought out or worked out by him remained a dreamer of dreams that will at last come true.

Even in the six short years since the Master died there have been signs of a wider outlook upon life: mere industrialism touched to finer issues by that great movement in the Arts and Crafts, which taking

root from the despised Pre-Raphaelitism of fifty years ago, finds in America a field of almost infinite extension. Not only in bookmaking but in every artistic impulse, crude and amateurish though some of it must necessarily be, is this principle of joy in one's labour, of comradeship in one's work making the rough places smooth. The House Beautiful is one of many mansions: it is also built up by successive generations of faithful workers in the walls of Time. Did Morris in his day merely prove the leader of a forlorn hope? But it was a sublime hope, one that has always been in the world though at times lost sight of; a hope possible of fulfilment here and now, a hope that was never meant to die out of the heart of man.

WILLIAM MORRIS:

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED THE XITH NOVEMBER MDCCCC AT KELMSCOTT HOUSE HAMMERSMITH BEFORE THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIALIST SOCIETY BY J. W. MACKAIL.

"Let the past be past, every whit of it that is not still living in us: let the dead bury their dead, but let us turn to the living, and with boundless courage and what hope we may, refuse to let the earth be joyless in the days to come.—Go on living while you may, striving with whatsoever pain and labour needs must be, to build up, little by little, the new day of fellowship, and rest, and happiness."

WILLIAM MORRIS.
(*News from Nowhere.*)

WILLIAM MORRIS:

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED THE XITH NOVEMBER MDCCCC AT KELMSCOTT HOUSE HAMMERSMITH BEFORE THE HAMMERSMITH SOCIALIST SOCIETY BY J. W. MACKAIL.

TWENTY-ONE years ago in this room then filled with looms, William Morris began the manufacture of his famous Hammersmith carpets. For many years thereafter it was in regular use for Socialist meetings and chiefly and exclusively at last for those of the Hammersmith Socialist Society. This Society, the last of those founded or joined by Morris, represents in a sense the success and failure of his life. It certainly represents the subject which in those later years engrossed his mind and lay nearest to his heart. When, therefore, Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson, one of the friends for whom Morris had a very special affection, asked me to open, in this historic room, this winter's course of meetings of the Hammersmith Socialist Society — the first after long disuse — with an address on the founder of the Society, and the former master of the house, the invitation was one which I could not well decline on the ground

I have given elsewhere, that what I have to say about Morris I have already said in the published record of his life.

I do not propose, however, now to go beyond or vary from that record, or to diverge into general criticism. What we think of great men matters very much to ourselves individually. It matters little to others; and least of all to the great men themselves, who were not much affected by criticism when they lived, and whose influence upon the world is hardly touched by the criticism, even though that be fairer in its judgment and larger in its view, which follows them after death. For this reason I will not attempt to give any general estimate of Morris, whether as a poet, craftsman, or designer, or as a manufacturer and employer of labour, or as a Socialist and revolutionary. I would rather set forth, as briefly and clearly as possible, the actual facts of his life; and when I have done so, add a few reflections on the central lesson for Socialists of the present day which I conceive these facts to involve.

WILLIAM MORRIS, the eldest son of William Morris, a partner in the firm of Sanderson & Company, bill-brokers in the City of London, was born at Elm House, Walthamstow, his father's suburban residence, on the 24th of March, 1834. In 1840, his father, who had by that time become a very wealthy man, removed to Woodford Hall, a large house now known as Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home, the park of which was only divided by a fence from Epping Forest. There throughout his boyhood he had the free range of that romantic tract of country, one of the few remains of mediæval, or perhaps even of prehistoric England. He was not notably precocious as a child, except that he learned to read, and was fond of reading at a very early age. From the small private school in the neighbourhood where he received his earlier education, he went to Marlborough College for four years; and then, after a year's interval of private study, to Exeter College, Oxford, where he went into residence in January 1853.

When he went up to Oxford in his nineteenth year, Morris had already developed

the strong lines of his character. The subtle admixture of blood, for which science can give no full account, had made him a born lover of the Middle Ages, and a born hater of the ages which followed them. In the boy who refused to go to London to see the Duke of Wellington's funeral in St. Paul's, and spent the day in a solitary ride through the Forest to the remains of Waltham Abbey, the Morris of later years may be clearly seen. This reaction from modern tastes was reinforced by the strong wave of the Anglo-Catholic religious revival. That wave had but lately spread over England, and on families brought up, like his, in a narrow Evangelical tradition, it acted as a powerful stimulating force. On its archeological side, this influence led him towards the study of Gothic art. At Marlborough, with the aid of the school library and all the specimens of ancient building within reach, he had made himself a good antiquarian, knowing, as he said himself afterwards, most of what was to be known about English Gothic. Already as a boy he had acquired a large and minute knowledge of trees, flowers, and birds. The school system at Marlborough then left a

boy free to use a great deal of his time as he liked. Close to it is the great forest of Savernake; all around it are the Wiltshire downs; and these surroundings were in complete harmony with his growing sense of romance and love of beauty.

At Oxford Morris at once formed the great friendship of his life, that with Edward Burne-Jones. From the very different upbringing of middle-class life in a large manufacturing town, Burne-Jones brought to Oxford an enthusiasm, a knowledge, and a lofty idealism, at all points in sympathy with those of Morris himself. Until death separated them, the two thenceforth lived in the closest intimacy, not only of daily intercourse, but of thought and work. Morris read only for a pass degree at College, and mixed little in the general life of his fellow-undergraduates beyond the circle of a few intimate friends. But he was an incessant, swift and omnivorous reader, and his prodigious memory enabled him in these few years to lay up a vast store of knowledge. Religious perplexities, under which he was at one time on the point of joining the Roman communion, came, and passed over. Ecclesiastical history and An-

glican theology were in turn mastered and put aside. Their influence was replaced by an artistic and social enthusiasm, largely nurtured on the study of Carlyle and Ruskin. He had serious thoughts, when he came of age, of devoting the whole of his fortune to the foundation of a monastery, in which he and his friends might live a communal ascetic life devoted to the production of religious art. This ideal became gradually enlarged and secularised, but remained in one form or another, his ideal throughout life. During a tour in Northern France with Burne-Jones, in the autumn of 1855, Morris took the decision which directed the whole of his later career. He had gone to Oxford an ardent Anglican, with the intention of entering the Church. But the Church, whether Anglican or Roman, had already become a fold too narrow for him. For the rest of his life, his own words of a later period, "In religion I am a pagan," were substantially true. Art now seemed to him to be the highest function of life, and architecture the highest and largest form of art. He made up his mind therefore to be an architect; broke the news with unusual reluctance and delicacy to his

dismayed family; and as soon as he had passed his final examinations at Oxford that winter, became an articled pupil in the office of Street, one of the leading architects of the revived English Gothic.

This course of life was arrested within the year by a new and unforeseen influence, that of Rossetti. When Morris followed Street to London, where Burne-Jones had already begun his lifelong work as a painter, the two young men lived in Rossetti's daily intimacy. Rossetti's theory of life then was that all men ought to be painters except that large and useful class whose function it was to buy the painters' pictures. His powers of persuasion were unequalled over every one on whom he chose to exert them, and he made an easy conquest of Morris. At the end of 1857 Morris left Street's office, and began to paint in a studio which he shared with Burne-Jones in Red Lion Square, Holborn.

Before this, he had already made trial of his powers in imaginative literature. The faculty of story-telling he had possessed even as a schoolboy; and at Oxford he had found that story-writing came to him just as easily. About the same time he had begun to write

lyrical poetry, in which from the very first he showed originality and power rare in any beginner, and not excelled by the earliest work of any English poet. The lyrics and prose romances which he contributed, during 1856, to the "Oxford and Cambridge Magazine," are the most remarkable among the contents of that remarkable volume. He went on writing poetry when he became a painter. In March 1858, he published a volume, "The Defense of Guenevere and other Poems," which, without having a large circulation or a wide fame, had a profound effect on its limited audience and through them on English poetry itself. But poetry was then, as in a way it always afterwards continued to be, only his relaxation. His regular work was drawing, painting in oil and water colour, modelling, illuminating, and designing. For several months in the autumn and winter of 1857, he was working with a company of friends on the celebrated tempera decorations of the Union Society's debating hall at Oxford. While engaged on this work he first met the lady whom he married in April 1859.

For several years after his marriage Morris

was absorbed in two intimately connected occupations: the building and decoration of a house of his own, and the foundation of an association of decorators who were also artists, with the view of reinstating decoration, down to the smallest details, as one of the fine arts. Red House, Upton, which is still extant with a good deal of its original decoration, though in greatly changed surroundings, was the first serious attempt made in this country in the present age, to apply art throughout to the practical objects of common life. Its requirements, and the problems it raised, had a large share in leading to the formation, in 1861, of the firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company, manufacturers and decorators, and to the whole of Morris' subsequent professional life. The decoration of churches was one side of the business. On its larger non-ecclesiastical side it gradually was extended to include, besides painted windows and mural decoration, furniture, metal and glass wares, painted tiles, cloth and paper wall-hangings, embroideries, jewellery, printed cottons, woven and knotted carpets, silk damasks and tapestries. After the first three years

a severe illness obliged Morris to choose between giving up his house in Kent and giving up his work in London. With great reluctance he chose the former, and in 1865 established himself, to be thenceforth a Londoner for life, in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, under the same roof with his workshops.

During these years poetry had been almost laid aside in the pressure of other occupations. But almost as soon as Morris returned to London he resumed it, in a new manner of extraordinary richness and beauty. The general scheme of "The Earthly Paradise" had been already framed by him: and he now began the composition of a series of narrative poems for that work, which went on continuously for four years. One of the earliest written, the story of the Golden Fleece, outgrew its limits so much as to become an epic of over ten thousand lines. Its publication in 1867, under the title of "The Life and Death of Jason," gave Morris wide fame and a secure position among the English poets. The three volumes of "The Earthly Paradise," successively published in the three following years, contain twenty-five

more narrative poems, connected with one another by a framework of intricate skill and singular fitness and beauty. The poems actually published by Morris in those four years — and there were many others which were either destroyed by him or still remain in manuscript—extend to over fifty thousand lines. His friends invented a story of a blue closet in his house completely filled with manuscript poetry from floor to ceiling.

This torrent of production did not make him slacken in his work as a decorator and manufacturer. To that work, on the contrary, he now began to add another: the production of illuminated manuscripts on paper and vellum, executed in many different styles, but all of unapproached beauty among modern work. About the same time he had begun the study of Icelandic and the translation of the Sagas into English. The portrait of Morris by Mr. Watts, which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, shows him in this culminating year of his earlier life, at the prime of his vigour and in the height of his powers.

Here the first act of Morris' life ends. It was a period of brilliant and romantic achieve-

ment. A pause of about four years followed it, the slack water between two great tides. What he had accomplished as an artist and a poet left him still unsatisfied. There may be traced in all his work during these four years a restlessness due to the constant search after fresh methods of artistic expression, and behind that, the growing feeling that inasmuch as true art is co-extensive with life, the true practice of art involves at every point and at every moment, questions belonging to the province of moral, social, and political doctrine. In the first of the four years fall two events slight in themselves, but both of the utmost importance in his life. One of them was his first journey through Iceland, the effect of which upon his mind may be traced in nearly all his later writings. The other was the discovery and acquisition of Kelmscott Manor House, a small but very beautiful building of the earlier seventeenth century on the banks of the upper Thames. His dwelling-place remained in London, but Kelmscott became his real home and more than his home: it was his haven of peace, his chief wordly treasure, the centre and symbol of that "love of the earth and worship of it"

which was his deepest instinct. But if it brought peace to him, that was not yet. He was hard at work, but working in a tangle. He tried his hand as a novelist. He made some curious and imperfectly successful attempts at reviving two forms of poetry long obsolete, the drama of the later Middle Ages, and the native English versification which had been swept away by Chaucer. He kept his hands in constant occupation as a scribe and illuminator. For a time he even resumed practice as a painter. The occasion which ended this period of fluctuation and indecision was a crisis that occurred in his business as a professional man and that led, in the winter of 1874, to the dissolution of the firm and the re-constitution of the business under Morris' sole management. From that winter the second part of his life began. He had already come to live in this neighbourhood, though not yet in this house; and the forces were now at work in him that changed him from the artist of Bloomsbury to the Socialist of Hammersmith. The new period which now opened had lost indeed the irrecoverable romance of youth, but was as copious in achievement upon a much wider field.

The first products of this second period, as of the first, were in literature. He had been for some time engaged in the production of an illuminated manuscript of Virgil's Æneid, and in the course of the work had begun to translate the poem into English verse. The manuscript was finally laid aside for the translation, which was finished and published in 1875. It had been preceded earlier in the year by a volume of translations from the Icelandic, and was followed almost at once by the composition of his longest poem, the epic of Sigurd the Volsung: which was, in Morris' own opinion, his highest if not his best work in poetry; and is memorable in literature as the poem which comes nearest to the spirit and manner of Homer of all European poems since the Iliad and Odyssey. But Morris' hands were never content to be holding nothing but a pen. Even while Sigurd was in progress he had taken up the practical art of dyeing in connexion with his manufacturing business. He spent months at Staffordshire and Nottingham dye-works, mastering all their processes, and experimenting in the revival of old or discovery of new methods. Two years spent among dye-vats

were followed by two more during which he was absorbed in work among looms, and in the revival of carpet-weaving as a fine art. But amid these labours he found himself insensibly taking more and more part in public affairs. From 1876 onwards he was one of the most active members of the Eastern Question Association, which did so much by its influence on public opinion to save the country from a disgraceful and disastrous war in defence of the Turkish Empire. In 1877 he founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. In 1879 he became treasurer of the National Liberal League. The giving of lectures and addresses had become one of his regular occupations. They were at first chiefly delivered to working designers and art students, but from the first involved his whole theory of life and practice. From a man of letters and artist, living intensely within a small circle, he rapidly developed, almost against his will, into a teacher, a leader, a man of public affairs.

So the process went on, until in 1882 a combination of convergent causes profoundly altered his attitude towards current politics and social questions. At first an enthusiastic

Liberal of the Radical wing, his enthusiasm waned, ceased, and was turned into open disgust, partly on account of the Irish coercive legislation of the Liberal Government of 1881, partly on account of the timidity or aversion with which that Government regarded social reform. At that period he surveyed the whole situation anew. Looking back, in his forty-ninth year, over his own record of success or failure, and looking forward to the future in the light of the past, he found himself forced to the conclusion that hitherto he had not gone to the root of the matter: that, art being a function of life, sound art was impossible except where life was organised under sound conditions: that the tendency of what is called civilisation, ever since the great industrial revolution, and more and more obviously in its continued progress, had been to dehumanise life: and that the only hope for the future was, if that were yet possible, to reconstitute society on a new basis. Many other practical men, many other students and artists have believed this. Morris proceeded to act on the belief.

A small association of advanced London Radicals, chiefly belonging to the working

class, who were advocates of a legislative programme of social reforms with implied tendencies towards state socialism, had just been formed under the name of the Democratic Federation. It was the only organisation existing and at hand which seemed to Morris, from his new point of view, to be at work in the right direction. What its programme substantially amounted to then was the securing of better conditions of life for the working class. Morris joined it in January, 1883, in the belief that this object was a necessary first step towards further progress, and was one which could be attained by properly organised action on the part of the working class itself. Within the year, the doctrine of the Federation had developed into professed Socialism, and Morris himself had become one of the leaders of the Socialist party.

Into the history of the movement during the following years I do not propose to enter at present. To some here it is too familiar, from others here perhaps too remote, to yield itself to any rapid summary. Parts of the story would be highly contentious. Parts are trivial and ignoble. Morris' own faith

never wavered; but as the years passed, his hope became very forlorn. The first great shock was the disruption of the Federation owing to jealousies among its leaders, and differences of opinion with regard to policy. The Socialist League, organised from the seceders, passed through similar vicissitudes. To its service Morris had given himself up with even more complete devotion. Forced by circumstances into a leadership of a struggling group, most of whom were poor, many ignorant, and some disloyal, he accepted the position with perfect simplicity; and conspicuous as he was among the rest alike by means, education, and character, he was to all of them a comrade and an equal.

It was not, I think, until 1887 that Morris became convinced that no social revolution was immediately practicable. It was, at all events, the experiences of the 13th of November in that year, the famous Bloody Sunday, which finally confirmed him in that view. He had already begun to relax the extreme tension at which he had been living in the previous years. The translation of the Odyssey into English verse, taken up by him for the recreation of spare half-hours or

tedious railway journeys, on his missions among the great manufacturing centres, was already completed. His imagination began to take a freer play. Without abatement in his Socialist beliefs, he resumed other and older interests. It was at this juncture that he expressed himself most fully, in what is the most perfect of his prose writings. "The Dream of John Ball," at once a romance, a political manifesto, and a study in the philosophy of history, exactly marks the point at which the old enthusiasm and the new wisdom mingled in complete equipoise and harmony. At the same time he formulated the true work of his party in words which have not been bettered by later experience: EDUCATION TOWARDS REVOLUTION BY INFLUENCE ON OPINION. All education not directed towards revolution fell short of the mark. All work towards revolution otherwise than through education fell wide of it. Such was the doctrine to which he had now come, and by which he remained.

Once Morris had satisfied himself that an ideal life was not attainable through any sudden revolution for the present world, he could let his imagination loose on the life of

a remote or fabulous past, or project it into the life of a still more remote and far more fabulous future. In the latter direction, one in which all human experience hitherto goes to show that failure, and generally grotesque failure, is certain, he made only a single essay. "News from Nowhere," a romantic pastoral describing the England of some remote future under realised Socialism, is the most singular of all Morris' writings in its inception, its production, and its fortunes. It was sketched out as a protest or counterblast against a crude American Utopia, called "Looking Backward," which had been enjoying a brief season of immense popularity — a sort of nightmare of State-Socialism in which, if one could conceive it as existing at all, life would have been intolerable to any human being after the first twenty minutes. It was contributed by Morris to the "Commonweal" after he had been ejected from its management by the Anarchist group in whose hands the "Commonweal" and the Socialist League itself soon afterwards came to an ignominious end. Yet, slight and fantastic as it is, it has been translated into three European languages,

and has probably spread the knowledge of Morris as a Socialist more widely than all his other writings.

The other direction, that of an imaginary past, in which he found scope for his imagination and relief from the pressure of the actual world, is represented by the long series of prose romances which he went on writing for the rest of his life. The first of these, "The House of the Wolflings," is a story in which the romantic and supernatural elements are placed in a semi-historical setting, the scene of the action being a Teutonic community of Central Europe in the time of the later Roman Empire. It was followed by "The Roots of the Mountains," a story of somewhat similar method, but of no definite place or time. In the next, "The Story of the Glittering Plain," he passed into a purely fabulous region, in which the remainder of the series continue to move. The last of these, "The Story of the Sundering Flood," was only finished by him a few weeks before his death.

Since 1887, when Morris' patient efforts at keeping it together began to slacken before accumulated discouragements, the Socialist

League had been dwindling in numbers and losing coherence. It passed into the control of the Anarchist section in 1889, and Morris formally withdrew from it the following year. It was then that, with the help of a few friends or neighbours, he founded, on a very humble and unpretending scale, the Hammersmith Socialist Society, which does me the honour to listen to this address, and which may still, as I hope, have a life before it not without use and honour and the sustaining sense of comradeship.

Without any modification in his creed, Morris now dropped insensibly into the position of what may be called a passive Socialist. The last and most absorbing interest of his later years, the famous Kelmscott Press, was then in course of being started. He had determined to revive the art of printing as it had flourished for the first half century after its invention, and succeeded in producing work of an excellence and beauty which since that age had been unknown, and which had and still has an immense effect over the practice of the art throughout the world. It was the art in which perhaps he came nearest to effecting a practical revolution. The

caprice of fashion, so often against him, turned now for once on his side. Even the old cases in which he kept his type seem to have retained a sort of sacramental virtue in other hands: and the market is crowded with imitations of Kelmscott printing which at least serve to set off the excellence of the original.

But the limit set by the frailty of human life had now been nearly reached. The Kelmscott Press was the last form taken by a productive energy more rich and various than any other which modern times have seen. So manifold indeed was Morris' activity that it puzzled an age accustomed to specialising, and perplexed his friends as well as his critics. But in fact all these varying energies were directed towards a single object, the reintegration of human life: and he practised so many arts because to him art was a single thing. Just so his work, while completely original and completely modern, bears an aspect of mediævalism, because it was all produced in relation to a single doctrine, namely this: that civilisation ever since the break-up of the Middle Ages had been, on the whole, on a wrong course, and that in

the specific arts as well as in the general conduct of life, it was necessary to go back to the Middle Ages, not with the view of remaining there, but of starting afresh from that point to trace out the path that had been missed. So long as any human industry existed which had once been an art (that is to say, a proper and rational occupation for human beings) in the full sense, and had now become merely mechanical or commercial, so long would Morris have instinctively passed from one to another, tracing back each to its source, and attempting to reconstitute each as a real art so far as the conditions of the modern world permitted. What led him towards Socialism was the full conviction, drawn both from reasoning and experience, that those existing conditions were stronger than any individual genius, and that for a new birth of art there was needed a new kind of life. For a little while, in the first flush and ardour of the Socialist crusade, that new kind of life seemed actually within reach. Morris suspended his own art to become a revolutionary, because it was a case of giving up the parts in order to gain the whole. When experience convinced him that the whole was,

for this generation at least, unattainable, he resumed his work on specific arts, because, to use his own words, he could not help it, and would be miserable if he were not doing it. Nor were those last years the least happy of a full and rich life. They were not many. In 1895 his health began to give way. The completion of the magnificent Kelmscott Chaucer, the love and labour of years, in June, 1896, came as a signal for his own going. He died that autumn, on the 3rd of October, in this house.

THE TIMES ARE STRANGE AND EVIL. Round us and within us we may see without much searching all the signs that hitherto have preceded great revolutions in human history. It is just four years since Morris died; but since then a great change has come, not only over that small and struggling Socialist party which drew from him so much of its consistency and vitality, but over the larger currents of public and national life. The end of the century, now close upon us, might well seem to any highly kindled imagination, the visible index of some approaching end of the world. To

those who hope for and work towards human progress, whether or not they call themselves by the name of Socialists, the outward aspect of the time is full of profound discouragement. Nor is the discouragement confined to them. It was said to me lately, by one whose memory goes back with clearness over fifty years, that one great difference between that time and this is the general loss of high spirits, of laughter and the enjoyment of life. If that be so, it is not without reasons. We may see all round us how vainly people try to drown in increasing luxury and excitement the sense that joy and beauty are dwindling out of life; with what pitiful eagerness they dress themselves up in pretended enthusiasms, which seem to bring little joy to the maker or the user. The uneasy feeling is abroad that the Nineteenth Century, which has done such wonderful things, and from which things so much more wonderful were hoped, has been on the whole a failure. Fifty years ago men's minds were full of ideals. Some of them seem to have come to nothing. Others have received a strangely disenchanting fulfilment. Cinder heaps smoulder where there once were beacon

fires. Everywhere is reaction triumphant. The chosen leaders of the people proclaim, not in England alone, that there is no more room left in public affairs for magnanimity. The strongest intellects range themselves on the side of force and riches. Religion has come to terms with the princes of this world. It was made a reproach, not without reason, against the revolutionarism of a century ago, that it went abroad with the cry, "Be my brother, or I will kill you." The modern spirit has substituted a more terrible gospel. What capitalism says now, to people all too ready to accept the command, is, "Be my slave, and you shall kill your brother." With a wider understanding of what a capitalist society involves, there seems to have come a dulling of men's consciences. Recent events have shown that even its more vivid and drastic methods of fire and sword are losing power to shock the careless cruelty of those who are at once its agents and its victims. Even the movement to which Morris devoted the best part of his life has dwindled and darkened: it has lost its high hopes, and seems tending, in France and Germany as well as in England, to the mere gas and

water socialism which does not lie beyond the scope of an enlightened capitalism, and can point with confidence to dividends as the test of its doctrines. We should not try to evade these facts. It is well to keep in mind, in times of depression no less than in times of elation, in disappointment as in hope, the words of a great English thinker nearly two hundred years ago: "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be: why, then, should we seek to be deceived?"

The Socialist movement of the eighties has become part of history; we can begin to see now, in the light where history sets it, what it meant to do, and what it did. I do not say, where it failed. For nothing in this world, properly speaking, fails. Causes have their effects, neither more nor less. So-called failure means that the causes, or the effects, or both, have been misunderstood. In Morris' own profound and fruitful words, "Men fight to lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out to be not what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name."

These words in "The Dream of John Ball" may be familiar to some of you. To no one who has ever grasped their meaning can they ever lose their weight and their power of guidance. They open too large a field to be dealt with in the few minutes for which I still ask your indulgence, for they cover, not a single man's work nor a single age's movement only, but the whole of human history. Restricting ourselves to that one effort to which, from the year 1883 onward, five or six years of Morris' life were almost wholly devoted; what was it that Socialists in England then meant to do, and how did they propose to do it?

They aimed at a great result, the total reconstitution of society. In the first flush of the movement nothing seemed impossible; and Morris, with all his practical sagacity and experience, shared the confidence of his colleagues. The social revolution seemed then a thing that a few years might compass, and that at all events men then living might reasonably hope to see. It was this they meant to effect. Some thought it could be brought about by raising the working classes in direct revolt against capitalism. Others

thought it could be brought about by an adroit use of existing forces, one balanced against another as the sails and rudder of a ship are set to make it move in a certain course. Others again thought it could be brought about by a great wave of feeling, and the growth of contagious enthusiasm among large masses of people. What none of them at first saw clearly was that they proposed to produce effects from insufficient causes. Vain-Hope the ferryman may take his passengers across the river; but he cannot pass them in through the gate.

This was perhaps most obvious in the Opportunist or Parliamentarian section of the party. These set out to avail themselves skilfully of the weak points in the existing system of government: to introduce a Socialist party as a small organised band which—if I may say so without any meaning of offence or dishonour — might sell itself alternately to the highest bidder among the great capitalist parties, and finally capture the citadel of government itself by a rush. They forgot that, even if they succeeded in doing so against almost infinite chances, and even if, against odds still more deadly, they

kept their own principles clear and their own ideals unstained amid the tortuous paths of policy, they would be no better off, towards the attainment of a truly socialised commonwealth, than they had been before. Until the world is Socialist, there can be no reign of Socialism. And however much fictitious strength may for the moment disguise essential weakness, it will crumple up directly that a real strain is put upon it.

But in their degree, the other sections of the party made the same mistake. Morris himself, though from the first he saw and stood out against the snares of opportunism, was greatly disposed for a time to believe in miracles: nor did he keep clear of the fault—honourable enough and pardonable enough in any leader of a forlorn hope, yet doubtful in its ultimate value — of assuming, before those whom he led and those whom he urged to join him, a greater confidence than he really felt. The single direction in which really effective work lay did not come to him at once, but it came to him soon. It had not come to him when he joined the Democratic Federation; for then he, like most of his colleagues, was only working towards Socialism,

was merely a Socialist in the making. By the time of the foundation of the Socialist League it had come to him — so his private letters clearly show — as a personal conviction. Before he quitted the League and formed this Society he had proclaimed it publicly and decisively; it is the burden of his later articles in "The Commonweal," and the substance of what he kept urging on his colleagues in public and in private. As a poet he might have enchanting visions of realised Socialism in a vague future. As a leader he might kindle his followers by hopes of work to be effected in a future quite close at hand. As what is called a practical man — a phrase too often used to mean a man who omits to bring his actions to the test of principles—he could not but see that definite improvements of detail might be effected in civic life by Parliament and by a Socialist group of members of Parliament. But as a Socialist pure and simple (the two epithets in the full weight of their meaning apply to Morris with consummate fitness) he knew that the work before him and those who stood by him was a single and definite thing only, and that was to make Socialists.

To make Socialists, not to prescribe work for them when made, not even to anticipate much what their work would be, still less to suppose that their work would do itself, that its results could be forced on society by terror, or wheedled out of society by dexterous intrigue, or stolen from society while it was asleep: that was the one path of duty, of honour, and even in a sense, of peace. All those other aims were foredoomed to failure (a failure that might be glorious or might be tragic or might be merely ludicrous) because the end they proposed to attain was wholly out of relation to the means they applied towards it. With as much reason might the earliest Christians have proposed to capture and revolutionise the Roman Empire. What they set themselves to do was just this, to make Christians. In three hundred years of that silent process Christianity itself became hardened, adulterated, partly sterilised. The early Church passed through all the phases with which modern Socialists are so familiar: wild unreasoning hope, predictions falsified by the event, treachery of comrades, fallings off to right hand and to left, bitter quarrels over matters of no importance, a growth of

fanatical dogma in which the central truths of their faith all but disappeared. But all the while the central instinct of making Christians lived on: and when Christians enough, such as they were, had been made, the Roman Empire — and by the Roman Empire I mean no mere machinery of government, but the whole fabric of European civilisation — dropped into their hands like a ripe pear.

To make Socialists then, so one finds Morris more and more clearly seeing, more and more urgently insisting as time went on, was the one thing needful. Failure in doing anything else than this was, properly speaking, not failure at all: for the mistake was to be doing anything else; and so far as they were marching on the wrong road, whether it were the Federation or the League, whether they called themselves Communists or Anarchists or Parliamentarians, failure to arrive at the journey's end was immaterial, just as success, supposing it arrived at, was illusory. Such success and such failure were alike severe tests that the faithful had to undergo. It was the test of failure that was the commonest one, and probably therefore

the one most needed. Many broke down under it. But Morris at all events remained firm in the belief that, in a phrase which must have clung deep in his mind, for he quotes it again and again in his private letters, he that shall endure shall be saved.

The passage in which that phrase occurs is a remarkable one. I will ask you to let me quote it in full, not merely as words placed, some forty years after his death, in the mouth of Jesus Christ, and believed then to represent substantially what he had himself said when he saw his death near, but as words of permanent truth and having a most direct bearing on the circumstances of the present day.

"Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.

"You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that you be not troubled; for all these things must come, but the end is not yet.

"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there shall be famines and pestilences: all these things are but the beginnings of the birth-pangs.

"They shall imprison and kill you: you shall be hated among all nations for my sake; and then shall many take offence, and betray one another, and hate one another. False prophets shall arise: injustice shall be filled up full: the love of many shall grow cold. But he that shall endure shall be saved."

And is this all? some may ask who set out with no less purpose than that of changing the world. How can we be content to be saved ourselves, what is that worth as the price of endurance, if the world remains obstinate in neither accepting nor desiring salvation? if even such success as may be gained only throws back the enemy on more impregnable entrenchments and summons up more overwhelming reserves of the hostile forces? For some it may be sufficient to say that no question of ultimate success can alter the plain path of duty. "Give her the wages of going on and not to die." But to ordinary human nature that is but a grim answer. The future is unknown to us. No discoveries of science and no analysis of history can throw any light on what will happen ten, or twenty, or five hundred years

hence. For that we have still to go to the poets or the prophets. Morris never lost the cheery courage that was willing to start over and over again, even with twelve disciples, as he said, or with half a dozen. Other men would have to fight for what he meant under another name: the Socialism of the Nineteenth Century might, as he said, have run into sand, but its foundations were on the rock, and on them, some day and by some men, the house of life would be built. Make Socialists, and let time work, for the day will come at last. In the passage of prophecy I quoted from the Gospels I stopped just now at the point up to which its truth can be verified by events, but the prophecy itself does not stop there. There is one more sentence. "He that shall endure shall be saved; and this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations: and then shall the end come."

The Bibelot

"As *an introduction to the unmutilated* Poems *of 1870 the superb tribute from Algernon Charles Swinburne will forever stand in the forefront of things unspotted and unspoiled of Time.*"[1] *Not that all other interpretations are impossible, or that no other save Mr. Swinburne might put forth considerations of very considerable value. On the contrary that unmatched and unmatchable* tour de force *gains in sober certainty when viewed not as an isolated example of what one great genius can do for another, but in connexion with the critical estimates of men less gifted with fervour; for example, Walter Pater's appreciation with its delicate* nuances, *reinforced in our present issue by what has long appeared to be a neglected essay by the late Frederic W. H. Myers.*[2]

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1 *See Preface to our forthcoming quarto edition of Rossetti's* Poems *ready in October.*

2 *F. W. H. Myers was born February 6, 1843, and died January 17, 1901. A list of his books comprises several volumes in prose and verse.* Essays; Classical and Modern (*2 vols., Globe 8vo, London, 1897*), *stands first in order of merit.* The Renewal of Youth and other Poems (*1882*) *contains excellent work, but has long been out of print.*

Thus, on the eve of publishing what is undoubtedly the first adequate reprint of Rossetti's Poems *of 1870, it is at least 'timely' that we give our readers a study charged, as they will presently perceive, with a profound understanding of the hidden relations "between this Religion of Art, this Worship of Beauty, and the older and more accredited manifestations of the Higher Life." Myers was quick to see that "the æsthetic movement" was not a mere fad of the hour. "Art has outlived the Puritans and the Inquisition," and here in America "as our best literature and our best society show," he predicted what is coming to pass: a liberal heritage in the new Ideal — the everlasting gospel of Culture.*

Taken as a whole, it is a sane and temperate presentation of what to the mere Philistine remains and doubtless will remain the rock of offense in Rossetti, which, with a stylistic dignity and a beauty all its own, cannot fail to win acceptance by its sweet reasonableness — its exquisite clarity of utterance.

Rossetti and the Religion of Beauty

By

F. W. H. Myers.

. . . Thou art gone before
To that remote, eternal, final shore
That was thine unforgotten goal;
And thou hast climbed the mount of Paradise;
And thy triumphant soul,
With him who living went that way,
And him who saw all Heaven with blinded eyes,
Rejoices in the day!

Rejoice at last, O souls,
That never were on earth completely glad
For the full vision that ye had
Of everlasting things;
Now sing within your shining aureoles
And strike the golden strings
Of an eternal lyre!
Thou, too, O latest comer in the Quire,
Whom most I praise with him
Thy master, and our milder English seer.
Lift up thy music clear;
For never didst thou find the vision dim,
Or long to linger here
Among the roses and the summer green,
But, knowing not a wavering in desire
With unrelenting wings
Thou fleddest past us towards eternal things
As swallows fly to summers never seen.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON.
(*An Italian Garden.*)

ROSSETTI AND THE RELIGION OF BEAUTY.

Among those picturesque aspects of life which the advance of civilisation is tending to reduce to smoothness and uniformity we may include that hubbub and conflict which in rougher days used to salute the appearance of any markedly new influence in science, literature, or art. Prejudice — not long since so formidable and ubiquitous a giant — now shows sometimes little more vitality than Bunyan's Pope or Pagan; and the men who stone one of our modern prophets do it hurriedly, feeling that they may be interrupted at any moment by having to make arrangements for his interment in Westminster Abbey.

Now, while it would be absurd not to rejoice in this increasing receptivity of cultivated men — absurd to wish the struggle of genius sharper, or its recognition longer deferred — we may yet note one incidental advantage which belonged to the older *régime*. While victory was kept longer in doubt, and while the conflict was rougher, the advocates of a new cause felt a stronger

obligation to master it in all its aspects, and to set it forth with such exposition as might best prepare a place for it in ordinary minds. The merits of Wordsworth (to take an obvious instance) were long ignored by the public; but in the meantime his admirers had explained them so often and so fully that the recognition which was at last accorded to them was given *on* those merits, and not in mere deference to the authority of any esoteric circle.

The exhibition of Dante Rossetti's pictures which now (February, 1883) covers the walls of Burlington House is the visible sign of the admission of a new strain of thought and emotion within the pale of our artistic orthodoxy. And since Rossetti's poetry expresses with singular exactness the same range of ideas as his painting, and is at any rate not inferior to his painting in technical skill, we may fairly say that his poetry also has attained hereby some sort of general recognition, and that the enthusiastic notices which appeared on his decease embodied a view of him to which the public is willing to some extent to defer.

Yet it hardly seems that enough has been

done to make that deference spontaneous or intelligent. The students of Rossetti's poems — taking their tone from Mr. Swinburne's magnificent eulogy — have for the most part rather set forth their artistic excellence than endeavoured to explain their contents, or to indicate the relation of the poet's habit of thought and feeling to the ideas which Englishmen are accustomed to trust or admire. And consequently many critics, whose ethical point of view demands respect, continue to find in Rossetti's works an enigma not worth the pains of solution, and to decry them as obscure, fantastic, or even as grossly immoral in tendency.

It will be the object of this essay—written from a point of view of by no means exclusive sympathy with the movement which Rossetti led — to show, in the first place, the great practical importance of that movement for good or evil; and, further, to trace such relations between this Religion of Art, this Worship of Beauty, and the older and more accredited manifestations of the Higher Life, as may indicate to the moralist on what points he should concentrate his efforts if, hopeless of withstanding the rising stream,

he seeks at least to retain some power of deepening or modifying its channel.

From the æsthetic side such an attempt will be regarded with indifference, and from the ethical side with little hope. Even so bold a peacemaker as the author of *Natural Religion* has shrunk from this task; for the art which he admits as an element in his Church of Civilisation is an art very different from Rossetti's. It is an art manifestly untainted by sensuousness, manifestly akin to virtue; an art which, like Wordsworth's, finds its revelation in sea and sky and mountain rather than in "eyes which the sun-gate of the soul unbar," or in

> "Such fire as Love's soul-winnowing hands distil,
> Even from his inmost ark of light and dew."

Yet, however slight the points of contact between the ethical and the æsthetic theories of life may be, it is important that they should be noted and dwelt upon. For assuredly the "æsthetic movement" is not a mere fashion of the day — the modish pastime of nincompoops and charlatans. The imitators who surround its leaders, and whose jargon almost disgusts us with the very mysteries of

art, the very vocabulary of emotion—these men are but the straws that mark the current, the inevitable parasites of a rapidly-rising cause. We have, indeed, only to look around us to perceive that—whether or not the conditions of the modern world are favourable to artistic *excellence*—all the main forces of civilisation are tending towards artistic *activity*. The increase of wealth, the diffusion of education, the gradual decline of the military, the hieratic, the aristocratic ideals—each of these causes removes some obstacle from the artist's path or offers some fresh prize to his endeavours. Art has outlived both the Puritans and the Inquisition; she is no longer deadened by the spirit of self-mortification, nor enslaved by a jealous orthodoxy. The increased wealth of the world makes the artist's life stable and secure, while it sets free a surplus income so large that an increasing share of it must almost necessarily be diverted to some form of æsthetic expenditure.

And more than this. It is evident, especially in new countries, that a need is felt of some kind of social distinction—some new aristocracy—based on differences other than

those of birth and wealth. Not, indeed, that rank and family are likely to cease to be held in honour; but, as power is gradually dissociated from them, they lose their exclusive predominance, and take their place on the same footing as other graces and dignities of life. Still less need we assume any slackening in the pursuit of riches; the fact being rather that this pursuit is so widely successful that in civilised capitals even immense opulence can now scarcely confer on its possessor all the distinction which he desires. In America, accordingly, where modern instincts find their freest field, we have before our eyes the process of the gradual distribution of the old prerogatives of birth amongst wealth, culture, and the proletariat. In Europe a class privileged by birth used to supply at once the rulers and the ideals of other men. In America the *rule* has passed to the multitude; largely swayed in subordinate matters by organised wealth, but in the last resort supreme. The *ideal* of the new community at first was Wealth; but, as its best literature and its best society plainly show, that ideal is shifting in the direction of Culture. The younger

cities, the coarser classes, still bow down undisguisedly to the god Dollar; but when this Philistine deity is rejected as shaming his worshippers, æsthetic Culture seems somehow the only Power ready to instal itself in the vacant shrine.

And all over the world the spread of Science, the diffusion of Morality, tend in this same direction. For the net result of Science and Morality for the mass of men is simply to give them comfort and leisure, to leave them cheerful, peaceful, and anxious for occupation. Nay, even the sexual instinct, as men become less vehement and unbridled, merges in larger and larger measure into the mere æsthetic enjoyment of beauty; till Stesichorus might now maintain with more truth than of old that our modern Helen is not herself fought for by two continents, but rather her εἴδωλον or image is blamelessly diffused over the albums of two hemispheres.

It is by no means clear that these modern conditions are favourable to the development either of the highest art or of the highest virtue. It is not certain even that they are permanent — that this æsthetic paradise of the well-to-do may not sometime be con-

vulsed by an invasion from the rough world without. Meantime, however, it exists and spreads, and its leading figures exert an influence which few men of science, and fewer theologians, can surpass. And alike to *savant,* to theologian, and to moralist, it must be important to trace the workings of a powerful mind, concerned with interests which are so different from theirs, but which for a large section of society are becoming daily more paramount and engrossing.

"Under the arch of Life," says Rossetti in a sonnet whose Platonism is the more impressive because probably unconscious —

> 'Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
> Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
> Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
> I drew it in as simply as my breath."

Rossetti was ignorant of Greek, and it seems doubtful whether he knew Plato even by translations. But his idealising spirit has reproduced the myth of the Phædrus—even to the τρέφεται καὶ εὐπαθεῖ — the words that affirm the repose and well-being of the soul when she perceives beneath the arch of heaven the pure Idea which is at once her sustenance and her lord: —

"Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee; which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath."

For Beauty, as Plato has told us, is of all the divine ideas at once most manifest and most lovable to men. When "Justice and Wisdom and all other things that are held in honour of souls" are hidden from the worshipper's gaze, as finding no avenue of sense by which to reach him through the veil of flesh, Beauty has still some passage and entrance from mortal eyes to eyes, "and he that gazed so earnestly on what things in that holy place were to be seen, he when he discerns on earth some godlike countenance or fashion of body, that counterfeits Beauty well, first of all he trembles, and there comes over him something of the fear which erst he knew; but then, looking on that earthly beauty, he worships it as divine, and if he did not fear the reproach of utter madness he would sacrifice to his heart's idol as to the image and presence of a god."

"This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,

How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!"

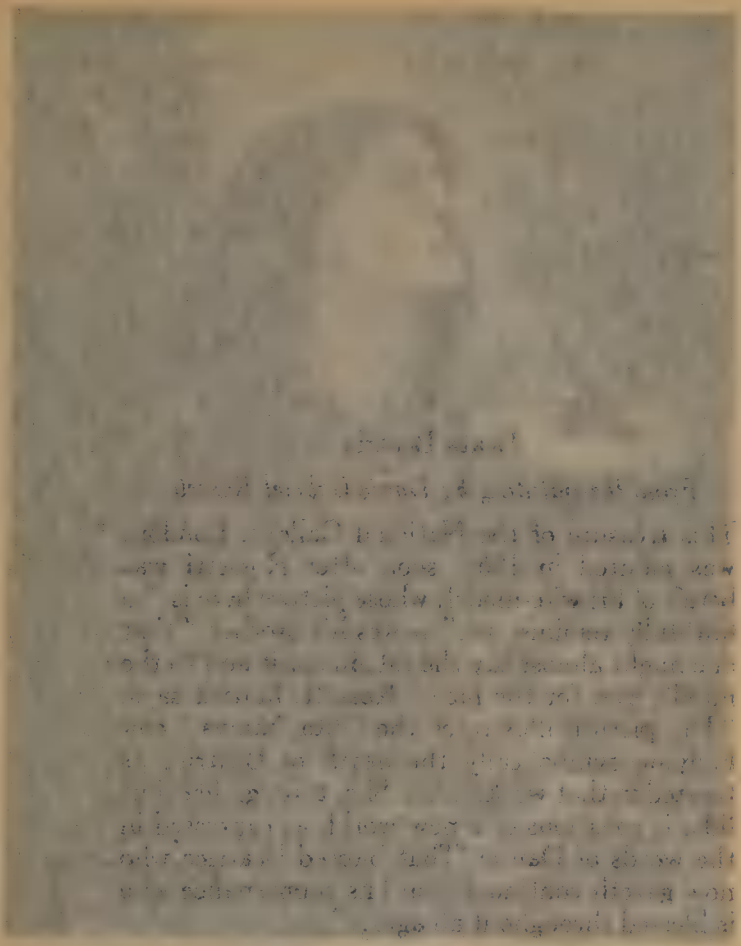
There are some few hearts, no doubt, in which "sky and sea" and the face of Nature are able to inspire this yearning passion. But with this newer school — with Rossetti especially — we feel at once that Nature is no more than an accessory. The most direct appeals, the most penetrating reminiscences, come to the worshipper of Beauty from a woman's eyes. The steady rise in the status of women; that constant deepening and complication of the commerce between the sexes which is one of the signs of progressive civilisation; all this is perpetually teaching and preaching (if I may say so) the charms of womanhood to all sections of the community. What a difference in this respect has the century since Turner's birth made in England! If another Turner were born now — an eye which gazed, as it were, on a new-created planet from the very bedchamber and outgoing of the sun — can we suppose that such an eye would still find its most attractive feminine type in the bumboats of Wapping? The anomaly, strange enough in Turner's day, is now inconceivable. Our

present danger lies in just the opposite direction. We are in danger of losing that direct and straightforward outlook on human loveliness (of which Mr. Millais may serve as a modern example) which notes and represents the object with a frank enjoyment, and seeks for no further insight into the secret of its charm. All the arts, in fact, are returning now to the spirit of Leonardo, to the sense that of all visible objects known to us the human face and form are the most complex and mysterious, to the desire to extract the utmost secret, the occult message, from all the phenomena of Life and Being.

Now there is at any rate one obvious explanation of the sense of mystery which attaches to the female form. We may interpret it all as in some way a transformation of the sexual passion. This essentially materialistic view is surrounded with a kind of glamour by such writers as Gautier and Baudelaire. The tone of sentiment thus generated is repugnant — is sometimes even nauseating — to English feeling; but this tone of sentiment is certainly not Rossetti's. There is no trace in him of this deliberate worship of Baal and Ashtoreth; no touch of

the cruelty which is the characteristic note of natures in which the sexual instincts have become haunting and dominant.

It is, indeed, at the opposite end of the scale—among those who meet the mysteries of love and womanhood with a very different interpretation — that Rossetti's nearest affinities are to be found. It must not be forgotten that one of his most exquisite literary achievements consists in a translation of the *Vita Nuova* of Dante. Now, the *Vita Nuova,* to the vulgar reader a childish or meaningless tale, is to those who rightly apprehend it the very gospel and charter of mystical passion. When the child Dante trembles at the first sight of the child Beatrice; when the voice within him cries *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi;* when that majestic spirit passes, at a look of the beloved one, through all the upward or downward trajectory between heaven and hell; this, indeed, is a love which appertains to the category of reasoned affections no more; its place is with the visions of saints, the intuitions of philosophers, in Plato's ideal world. It is recognised as a secret which none can hope to fathom till we can discern



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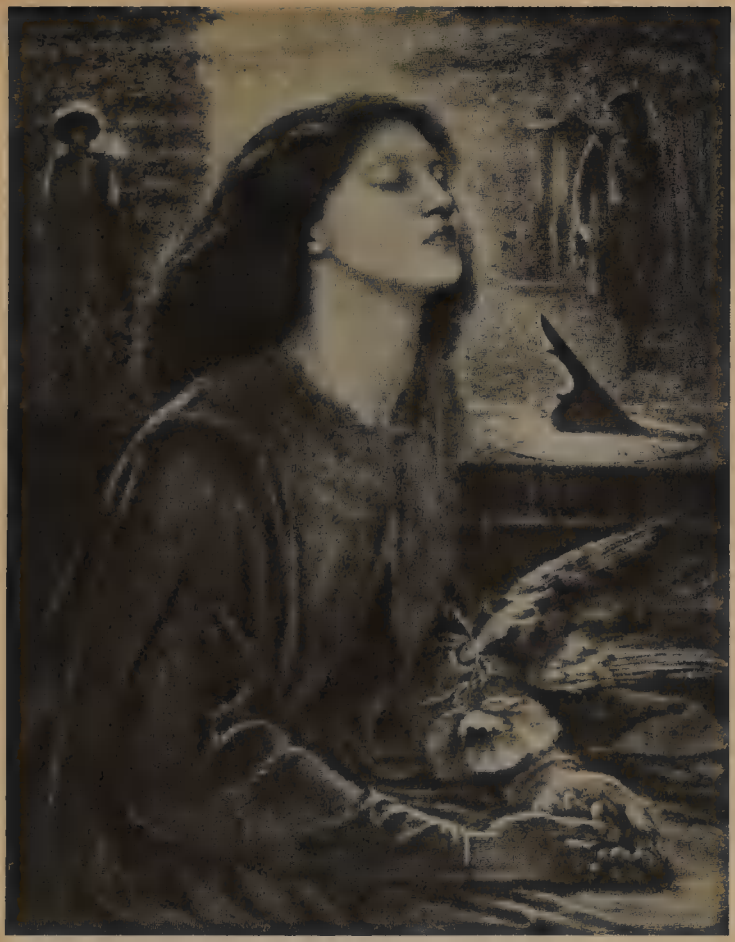
Beata Beatrix

From the painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

This treasure of the National Gallery, London, was painted in 1863, soon after Rossetti was bereft of his wife-model, whose picture here is "so faithfully reminiscent," writes his brother, "that one might almost say she sat, in spirit and to the mind's eye, for the face." Rossetti himself says: "The picture illustrates the 'Vita Nuova,' embodying symbolically the death of Beatrice as treated in that work. . . . She, through her shut lids, is conscious of a new world, as expressed in the words of Dante: 'That blessed Beatrice who now gazeth continually on His countenance who is blessed throughout all ages.'"



from some mount of unearthly vision what those eternal things were indeed to which somewhat in human nature blindly perceived itself akin.

The parallel between Rossetti and Dante must not be pushed too far. Rossetti is but as a Dante still in the *selva oscura;* he has not sounded hell so profoundly, nor mounted into heaven so high. He is not a prophet but an artist; yet an artist who, both by the very intensity of his artistic vision, and by some inborn bent towards symbol and mysticism, stands on the side of those who see in material things a spiritual significance, and utters words of universal meaning from the fulness of his own heart. Yet he is, it must be repeated, neither prophet, philosopher, nor saint. The basis of his love is the normal emotion — "the delight in beauty alloyed with appetite, and strengthened by the alloy"; — and although that love has indeed learned, in George Eliot's words, to "acknowledge an effect from the imagined light of unproven firmaments, and have its scale set to the grander orbit of what hath been and shall be," this transfiguration is effected not so much by any elevation of

ethical feeling, as by the mere might and potency of an ardent spirit which projects itself with passionate intensity among things unreachable and unknown. To him his beloved one seems not as herself alone, "but as the meaning of all things that are"; her voice recalls a prenatal memory, and her eyes "dream against a distant goal." We hear little of the intellectual aspects of passion, of the subtle interaction of one character on another, of the modes in which Love possesses himself of the eager or the reluctant heart. In these poems the lovers have lost their idiosyncrasies; they are made at one forever; the two streams have mingled only to become conscious that they are being drawn together into a boundless sea. Nay, the very passion which serves to unite them, and which is sometimes dwelt on with an Italian emphasis of sensuousness which our English reserve condemns, tends oftener to merge itself in the mystic companionship which holds the two souls together in their enchanted land.

"One flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player
Even where my lady and I lay all alone;
Saying: 'Behold, this minstrel is unknown;

Bid him depart, for I am minstrel here;
Only my strains are to Love's dear ones dear.'
Then said I: 'Through thine haut-boy's rapturous tone
Unto my lady still this harp makes moan,
And still she deems the cadence deep and clear.'

"Then said my lady: 'Thou are Passion of Love,
And this Love's Worship; both he plights to me
Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea;
But where wan water trembles in the grove,
And the wan moon is all the light thereof,
This harp still makes my name its Voluntary.'"

The voluntaries of the white-winged harp-player do not linger long among the accidents of earth; they link with the beloved name all "the soul's sphere of infinite images," all that she finds of benign or wondrous "amid the bitterness of things occult." And as the lover moves amid these mysteries it appears to him that Love is the key which may unlock them all. For the need is not so much of an intellectual insight as of an elevation of the whole being — a rarefaction, as it were, of man's spirit which Love's pure fire effects, and which enables it to penetrate more deeply into the ideal world.

In that thin air Love undergoes a yet further transformation. The personal element,

already sublimed into a mystic companionship, retires into the background. The lover is now, in Plato's words, ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ; he has set sail upon the ocean of Beauty, and Love becomes the ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον, the "interpreter and mediator between God and man," through whom the true prayer passes and the true revelation is made.

"Not I myself know all my love for thee:
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
To-morrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
And shall my sense pierce love—the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity?"

For thus, indeed, is Love discerned to be something which lies beyond the region of this world's wisdom or desire — something out of proportion to earthly needs and to causes that we know. Here is the point where the lover's personality seems to be exalted to its highest, and at the same moment to disappear; as he perceives that his individual emotion is merged in the flood and tideway of a cosmic law: —

"Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand—
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call
And veriest touch of powers primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand."

Alas! this call, by its very nature, is heard in one heart alone; this "touch of powers primordial" is intransferable to other souls. The eyes which, to the lover's vision,

"The sun-gate of the soul unbar,
Being of its furthest fires oracular,"

can send this message to the world only through sign and symbol; the "bower of unimagined flower and tree" is fashioned by Love in such hearts only as he has already made his own.

And thus it is that so much of Rossetti's art, in speech or colour, spends itself in the effort to communicate the incommunicable. It is toward "the vale of magical dark mysteries" that those grave low-hanging brows are bent, and "vanished hours and hours eventual" brood in the remorseful gaze of Pandora, the yearning gaze of Proserpine. The pictures that perplex us with their obvious incompleteness, their new and

haunting beauty, are not the mere caprices of a richly-dowered but wandering spirit. Rather they may be called (and none the less so for their shortcomings) the sacred pictures of a new religion; forms and faces which bear the same relation to that mystical worship of Beauty on which we have dwelt so long, as the forms and faces of a Francia or a Leonardo bear to the mediæval mysteries of the worship of Mary or of Christ. And here it is that in Rossetti's pictures we find ourselves in the midst of a novel symbolism — a symbolism genuine and deeply felt as that of the fifteenth century, and using once more birds and flowers and stars, colours and lights of the evening or the dawn, to tell of beauties impalpable, spaces unfathomed, the setting and resurrection of no measurable or earthly day.

It is chiefly in a series of women's faces that these ideas seek expression. All these have something in common, some union of strange and puissant physical loveliness with depth and remoteness of gaze. They range from demon to angel — as such names may be interpreted in a Religion of Beauty — from Lilith, whose beauty is destruction, and

Astarte, throned between the Sun and Moon in her sinister splendour, to the *Blessed Damozel* and the "maiden pre-elect," type of the love whose look regenerates and whose assumption lifts to heaven. But all have the look — characteristic of Rossetti's faces as the mystic smile of Leonardo's — the look which bids the spectator murmur —

> "What netherworld gulf-whispers doth she hear,
> In answering echoes from what planisphere,
> Along the wind, along the estuary?"

And since these primal impulses, at any rate, will remain to mankind, since Love's pathway will be retrodden by many a generation, and all of faith or knowledge to which that pathway leads will endure, it is no small part of the poet's function to show in how great a measure Love does actually pre-suppose and consist of this exaltation of the mystic element in man; and how the sense of unearthly destinies may give dignity to Love's invasion, and steadfastness to his continuance, and surround his vanishing with the mingled ecstasy of anguish and of hope. Let us trace, with Rossetti, some stages of his onward way.

The inexplicable suddenness with which Love will sometimes possess himself of two several hearts — finding a secret kinship which, like a common aroma, permeates the whole being of each — has often suggested the thought that such companionship is not in reality now first begun; that it is founded in a prenatal affection, and is the unconscious prolongation of the emotions of an ideal world —

> "Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, love,
> That among souls allied to mine was yet
> One nearer kindred than life hinted of.
> O born with me somewhere that men forget,
> And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
> Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough!"

It is thus that Rossetti traces backward the kindling of the earthly flame. And he feels also that if love be so pervading, so fateful a thing, the man who takes it upon him has much to fear. He moves among great risks; "the moon-track of the journeying face of Fate" is subject for him to strange perturbations, to terrible eclipse. What if his love be a mistake?—if he feels against his will a disenchantment stealing over the enchanted garden, and his new self

walking, a ghastly intruder, among scenes vainly consecrated by an illusive past?

"Whence came his feet into my field, and why?
How is it that he finds it all so drear?
How do I see his seeing, and how hear
The name his bitter silence knows it by?"

Or what of him for whom some unforgotten hour has marred his life's best felicity, *et inquinavit aere tempus aureum?* What of the recollection that chills his freest moments with an inward and icy breath?

"Look in my face, my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell."

There is no need to invite attention to the lines which thus begin. They will summon their own auditors; they will not die till that inward Presence dies also, and there sits not at the heart of any man a memory deeper than his joy.

But over all lovers, however wisely they may love, and well, there hangs one shadow which no wisdom can avert. To one or other the shock must come, the separation which will make the survivor's afterlife seem something posthumous, and its events like the changes in a dream.

Without intruding into the private story of a life which has not yet been authoritatively recounted to us, we may recognise that on Rossetti the shock of severance, of bereavement, must have fallen with desolating force. In several of his most pregnant poems, — in the sonnets entitled *Willow-wood* most of all, — those who know the utmost anguish of yearning have listened to a voice speaking as though from their own hearts. The state of tension, indeed, which finds utterance in these sonnets is by its very nature transitory. There comes a time when most men forget. But in some hearts the change which comes ever the passion of love is not decay, but transfiguration. That passion is generalised, as Plato desired that it should be generalised, though in a somewhat different way. The Platonic enthusiasm of admiration was to extend itself "from one fair form to all fair forms," and from fair forms to noble and beautiful ideas and actions, and all that is likest God. And something not unlike this takes place when the lover feels that the object of his earthly worship, now removed from his sight, is becoming identified for him with all else that he has been wont to

revere — representative to him, to use Plato's words again, "of those things, by dwelling on which it is that even a god is divine." It is not, indeed, the bereaved lover only who finds in a female figure the ideal recipient of his impulses of adoring love. Of how many creeds has this been the inspiring element! — from the painter who invokes upon his canvas a Virgin revealed in sleep, to the philosopher who preaches the worship of Humanity in a woman's likeness, to be at once the Mother and the Beloved of all. Yet this ideal will operate most actively in hearts which can give to that celestial vision a remembered reality, whose "memorial threshold" seems visibly to bridge the passage between the transitory and the supernal world.

"City, of thine a single simple door,
By some new Power reduplicate, must be
Even yet my life-porch in eternity,
Even with one presence filled, as once of yore;
Or mocking winds whirl round a chaff-strewn floor
Thee and thy years and these my words and me."

And if sometimes this transmuted passion — this religion of beauty spiritualised into a beatific dream — should prompt to quietism rather than to vigorous action, — if sometimes

we hear in the mourner's utterance a tone as of a man too weak for his destiny — this has its pathos too. For it is a part of the lot of man that the fires which purify should also consume him, and that as the lower things become distasteful the energy which seeks the higher things should fade too often into a sad repose.

"Here with her face doth Memory sit,
  Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it—
  Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer;
While hopes and aims, long lost with her,
  Stand round her image side by side,
  Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulchre."

And when the dream and the legend which inspired Rossetti's boyhood with the vision of the *Blessed Damozel* — which kindled his early manhood into the sweetest *Ave* that ever saluted "Mary Virgin, full of grace" — had transformed themselves in his heart into the reality and the recollection; when Love had been made known to him by life itself and death — then he had at least gained power to show how the vaguer worship may become a concentrated expectancy: how one

vanished hand may seem to offer the endless welcome, one name to symbolise all heaven, and to be in itself the single hope.

"Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er,
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
Not less nor more, but e'en that word alone."

Enough, perhaps, has been said to indicate not only how superficial is the view which represents Rossetti as a dangerous sensualist, but also how inadequately we shall understand him if we think to find in him only the commonplaces of passion dressed out in fantastic language and Italianised allegory. There is more to be learnt from him than this, though it be too soon, as yet, to discern with exactness his place in the history of our time. Yet we may note that his sensitive and reserved individuality; his life, absorbed in Art, and aloof from — without being below — the circles of politics or fashion; his refinement, created as it were from within, and independent of conventional models, point him out as a member of that new aristocracy of which we have already spoken,

that *optimacy* of passion and genius (if we may revive an obsolete word to express a new shade of meaning) which is coming into existence as a cosmopolitan gentility among the confused and fading class-distinctions of the past. And, further, we may observe in him the reaction of Art against Materialism, which becomes more marked as the dominant tone of science grows more soulless and severe. The instincts which make other men Catholics, Ritualists, Hegelians, have compelled him, too, to seek "the meaning of all things that are" elsewhere than in the behaviour of ether and atoms, though we can track his revelation to no source more explicit than the look in a woman's eyes.

But if we ask — and it was one of the questions with which we started — what encouragement the moralist can find in this counter-wave of art and mysticism which meets the materialistic tide, there is no certain or easy answer. The one view of life seems as powerless as the other to supply that antique and manly virtue which civilisation tends to undermine by the lessening effort that it exacts of men, the increasing enjoyment that it offers to them. "Time has

run back and fetched the age of gold," in the sense that the opulent can now take life as easily as it was taken in Paradise; and Rossetti's poems, placed beside Sidney's or Lovelace's, seem the expression of a century which is refining itself into quietism and mellowing into decay.

Yet thus much we may safely affirm, that if we contrast æstheticism with pure hedonism — the pursuit of pleasure through art with the pursuit of pleasure simply as pleasure — the one has a tendency to quicken and exalt, as the other to deaden and vulgarise, the emotions and appetencies of man. If only the artist can keep clear of the sensuous selfishness which will, in its turn, degrade the art which yields to it; if only he can worship beauty with a strong and single heart, his emotional nature will acquire a grace and elevation which are not, indeed, identical with the elevation of virtue, the grace of holiness, but which are none the less a priceless enrichment of the complex life of man. Rossetti could never have summoned us to the clear heights of Wordsworth's *Laodamia*. Yet who can read the *House of Life* and not feel that the poet has known

Love as Love can be—not an enjoyment only or a triumph, but a worship and a regeneration; Love not fleeting nor changeful, but "far above all passionate winds of welcome and farewell;" Love offering to the soul no mere excitation and by-play, but "a heavenly solstice, hushed and halcyon;" Love whose "hours elect in choral consonancy" bear with them nothing that is vain or vulgar, common or unclean. He must have felt as no passing tragedy the long ache of parted pain, "the ground-whirl of the perished leaves of hope," "the sunset's desolate disarray," the fruitless striving "to wrest a bond from night's inveteracy," to behold "for once, for once alone," the unforgotten eyes re-risen from the dark of death.

Love, as Plato said, is the ἑρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθμεῦον, "the interpreter and mediator" between things human and things divine; and it may be to Love that we must look to teach the worshipper of Beauty that the highest things are also the loveliest, and that the strongest of moral agencies is also the most pervading and keenest joy. Art and Religion, which no compression could amalgamate, may by Love be expanded and interfused;

and thus the poet may not err so wholly who seeks in a woman's eyes "the meaning of all things that are;" and "the soul's sphere of infinite images" may not be a mere prismatic fringe to reality, but rather those images may be as dark rays made visible by passing through the medium of a mind which is fitted to refract and reflect them.

A faint, a fitful reflex! Whether it be from light of sun or of moon, *sole repercussum aut radiantis imagine lunae,*—the glimmer of a vivifying or of a phantom day —may scarcely be for us to know. But never yet has the universe been proved smaller than the conceptions of man, whose farthest, deepest speculation has only found *within* him yet profounder abysses,—*without,* a more unfathomable heaven.

The Bibelot

We again lay ourselves open to the charge of "timeliness" in reprinting this essay on The New Mysticism;[1] *let us hope, notwithstanding the self-interested implication,*[2] *that our action will be construed in its higher and wider sense. So much is "timely" that proves impermanent, so little eternal that compels immediate and lasting attention! For those who have followed our attempt to give prominence to the Celtic movement this criticism of its greatest exponent is not alone "timely," but is also in direct line with what has gone before in these pages.*[3]

Stated without undue haste or heat, the work of Fiona Macleod is indubitably the most subtle blend of spiritual insight and passionate outlook that is being produced in the world to-day. Eight years ago

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1 *From the* Fortnightly Review *for June, 1900.*

2 *We refer to our having published* From the Hills of Dream (1901) *in its revised and augmented form.* The Silence of Amor: Prose Rhythms, *and* By Sundown Shores.

3 *See* A Little Garland of Celtic Verse *and* Lyrics from the Hills of Dream *in* The Bibelot *Vol. VI, Pp. 255-290; 397-428, and* Celtic: A Study in Spiritual History, *Vol. VII, Pp. 349-384.*

her first book was first read by us; since then, such is the white magic of it all, that everything she has written seems to have become part and parcel of our mental being from a time beyond time!

Seldom, indeed, does an author of such soul-compelling powers find a contemporary interpreter like Mr. Ernest Rhys.[4] *Himself both poet and romance-writer of no mean ability and of allied Celtic strain, he has, (to use an exquisite phrase of Miss Macleod's own invention,) put his earth-heart to her sea-heart, with the best possible outcome. As a luminous exposition of what she has already accomplished,—a premonition of what we may reasonably expect in the near future,*[5]—The New Mysticism *must be read and pondered.*

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4 *Author of* A London Rose and Other Rhymes (*1894*), The Fiddler of Carne; A North-Sea Romance, (1896) Welsh Ballads and other Poems, (*1898*) *and editor of various literary series.*

5 The Magic Kingdoms, *"a volume upon which she has been intermittently at work for two or three years past" and "the long-delayed second volume of verse, will probably be published during the coming winter season"—thus* The Athenæum *for July* 26, 1902 (*p. 129*).

THE NEW MYSTICISM
By
ERNEST RHYS.

"It is we of the human clan only who are troubled by the vast waste and refuse of life. There is not any such waste, neither in the myriad spawn nor the myriad seed: a Spirit sows by a law we do not see, and reaps by a law we do not know. . . .

There are mysteries of which I cannot write; not from any occult secret, but because they are so simple and inevitable, that, like the mystery of day and night, or the change of the seasons, or life and death, they must be learned by each, in his own way, in his own hour. It is out of their light that I see, it is by these stars that I set forth, where else I should be as a shadow upon a trackless waste."

THE DIVINE ADVENTURE.

It is not eight years since *Pharais* appeared, and it is too soon to attempt a map of the illusive region into which it first led us, the continually changing region of Miss Fiona Macleod's fantasy. A romance written by a mystic, so *Pharais* might be considered. Its human people lived in a conditional Paradise, hung a little nearer the sky than common earth; a people subject to beings more vital and powerful than themselves: sea and wind, the elements and the spirits of the elements. *The Mountain Lovers* followed; a pastoral, exquisite in colour, but too unusual, too much haunted with a mountain wildness for the crowd. Later books, stories like *The Sin Eater* and *The Dan-nan-Ron,* showed, with no want of originality, more of what may be called the dramatic probabilities, and of certain qualities, vivid and poignant, which were taken to promise a new Gaelic saga — perhaps a new kind of tale-telling altogether. Was the tale-teller then, dear to so many who care nothing for high fantasy, to grow in this writer, and the mystic to decline? When the reply to this came, it was in *The Dominion of*

Dreams, whose very title is a challenge to the ordinary intelligence, and the realist, in us. Last of all, we have *The Divine Adventure,*[1] a tale, an intense fable of the spirit, set among the same scenes, in which all the vanities of the fabulists are left out. After which, while drawn to go on speculating, the reader would be bold who would set bounds to the writings of so incalculable a writer.

The poet and tale-writer who is at heart a mystic is, at any time, a rare comer, and the writer who, writing in English, attempts like Miss Fiona Macleod and Mr. W. B. Yeats to bend the archaic Celtic stock, which is both stubborn and subtle, to the modern usage, is come on an errand of miracle. There is a superb tradition for the new English poet who is content to follow in the lyric line of the great masters before him, and to add his gain or more of originality to the forms they used and the kind of subjects they chose; and there is an inspiring tradition for the mystic to-day who will turn to Germany or the south, to forerunners like

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1 *The Divine Adventure; Iona; By Sundown Shores.* Studies in Spiritual History. By Fiona Macleod. Chapman & Hall, Ld. 1900.

Novalis and Jacob Boehme, or to St. Francis and St. Martin, or the Catholic Mystics late and early, for his masters. But for the writer on Celtic themes, who, not using their natural tongue, has to employ names that are unfamiliar, allusions blunted in translation, and legends confused between the Pagan and Christian colours they bear, the road is much harder. How Mr. Yeats has succeeded in triumphing over its difficulties, as a visionary, and a poet in art, we have seen: but even now he has scarcely had his full tribute. Miss Macleod has come later upon the scene; but it is only by her latest work that she, in turn, can hope — or so one fears — to have her recognition, and be known even by outsiders as more than the "obscure chronicler of obscure things" that she termed herself in her dedication of *Pharais* to an English friend.

It is only through her latest writings, *The Divine Adventure,* the essay toward the writing of what she terms a "spiritual history" of Iona, and some shorter pieces, that one can hope to know what the writer thinks of her region of thought and its possibilities. In the Iona essay and in the

shorter pieces there are many significant things which count among those intended to let readers into the secrets of a writer's writing craft, philosophy, sense of art, and what not besides. In these pages she offers many luminous little asides, suggestions for the better understanding that delays perhaps to arrive between author and reader, or considerations of the Celtic habit in literature; and affords in this way a tentative *apologia* for her life, and its imaginative expression.

"For myself," she writes, in the essay which she has entitled, all short, "*Celtic*" — "I would say that I do not seek to reproduce ancient Celtic presentments of tragic beauty and tragic fate, but do seek in nature and in life, and in the swimming thought of timeless imagination, for the kind of beauty that the old Celtic poets discovered and uttered." And she continues: "There were poets and myth-makers in those days; and to-day we may be sure that a new mythus is being woven, though we may no longer humanise and euhemerise the forces of Nature and her silent and secret processes; for the mythopoeic faculty is not only a primitive

instinct, but a spiritual need." To find a sensitive instrument for this need grows harder to-day at every turn of the imagination. With the currents of thought setting altogether in other directions, how is the imagination in this kind to get stimulus, and gather its associations, and fashion its other-world; how is it to build its region about it? The author of *Pharais* has solved this matter by going to the western isles and the sea-confines of the Hebrides, where the smoke of cities, and the dust of the mob, have not yet destroyed the lingering vestiges, beautiful and alack! perishable, of the Ionic Gael.

What inestimable good-fortune for any poet or mystic to-day to be native to a region, full of the sea's mystery and mountain charm and the memory of the old Gaelic world, whose natural wildness is not yet lost, whose wonder has not been pricked by the pens of the disillusionist. Not everyone cares, it is true, for the wild scenic effect of Iona. Montalembert, who visited it when he was writing his *Monks of the West*, thought it only desolate. "The gloom and shine of the mountains that throw their shadow on the

sea," which Miss Fiona Macleod never tires of describing . . . "the haunted shore which none loves save with passion . . . the land of hills and glens and heroes, as one of the ancient poets called it, *Tir nam Beann s'nan gleann' s'nan ghaisgach*": these did not appeal to him. But many of us will remember the reproach of the late Duke of Argyll and overlord of Iona, as he recalled the stigma which Montalembert — a master of the Celtic picturesque — had put upon its seascape. And even Montalembert must have given way before Miss Macleod's fervour of delight in the illimitable pale wave, the dusk of the underwater, the spell-bound silences of these island places, and the unfathomable gulfs of sky over unfathomable gulfs of sea. Nor is this all. For her it is not a mere rapture of the picturesque. If she hails the delicate pomp of summer skies, when that comes to a region often austere, and vexed by wet winds and cold mists, she loves the place, apart from its golden moods and purple splendours. She loves this island world for itself, as one of its strange children, Alison Achanna, "the anointed man," loved it, with a kind of obsession, which made the mourn-

ful, stony places, and the bleak sodden pastures of Eilanmore, even in the autumn rains, into holy ground.

And so it comes that Miss Macleod, in her essay on "Iona," making pause for a confession, tells us that there is another Iona than the chroniclers have known or the gazetteers have put into their Scotland. It is the place of heart's desire, the white isle of the Gaelic dreamer, which none can understand who does not see it as played upon by the cross lights of Pagan and Christian tradition, as coloured by the blended and changing colours of Paganism, and romance, and spiritual beauty. And even this is not all. For there is yet an Iona that is more than a Gaelic Mecca, more than a place illumined by the desires of the world; the Iona that is the little home of the heart, "that, if we will it so, is a mirror of your heart and mine."

This is, one may think, to make a transcendent claim for any spot of earth. But this is the feeling, tender, human, uncontrolled and hardly controllable, which, called up by other less famously alluring spots of earth in the western islands and highlands, has lent warmth to her fable, warm life to her dreams.

This intense feeling for place is the common heritage, you may say, of her race, and not enough in itself to account for a new imagination of life, wider than that of any particular people, and as essential as any vision, æsthetic or spiritual, must be, to appeal powerfully to the universal human spirit. To be a neo-Celt merely, with a passion for one's inherited corner of the world and its old association, and with a power to express it, is not enough. It is, in fact, to another intensive element in Miss Fiona Macleod's writing that one must turn to account for the last impulse of her work, which helps to give it the effect of being more than a highly original literary entertainment. In all her work one seems to trace it; in her later work alone it becomes quite clear, and is consciously presented. It is, in brief, a new emotion of the woman's ancient predicament, and of her love and its revolt against fate, added to a strange conviction of a mysterious predestined part to be played by her hereafter in the moving drama of spirit and sense. It would be impossible, obviously, to declare in passing the final virtue of such a message, veiled as it is in every device of allegory and romance.

But of the emotion with which it is presented, and returned to, and of its quickening power upon the writer's imagination, none that reads can doubt. It is the secret, no doubt, of much that in Miss Fiona Macleod's work is, at a first glance, inchoate, over-wrought, too impassioned for pure art; and it explains, too, the presence in her writings of the ideal St. Bridget, whose neo-Celtic recall may prove to be the first word of a New Mysticism.

As for the form of her writings, and the Gaelic colour which she uses so profusely — too profusely, it may seem to the critical Saxon, at times — these add very much to the difficulty of estimating them. There would seem to be a very deliberate theory on the writer's part of her whole craft as a writer; but, in spite of her account of it, is is not easy to say at once how it acquired its particular bias. One traces in it foreign influences — the sensation and impressionism of the later French school, the phrase of M. Maeterlinck, the cadence of a Rossetti, the rhythm even of Mr. Yeats — along with those things that can be termed Gaelic and native. But the result is there, vital and individual and, allowing for the earlier

violence of style and for mannerisms which in the later writings tend to disappear, harmonious and natural, one feels, to the writer's habit of thought, and to a temperament restless, emotional, intense.

To understand her method as a writer of tales and parables, it is necessary to turn to the archaic folk she has summoned out of the old Gaelic world. Long ago, Eugenius Philalethes (the brother of Henry Vaughan the Silurist) and other mystics talked of the alchemy by which a flower might be recreated from its ash and made to bloom again. In art it is possible to "quick the dead," as an old writer termed it: into their ancient memory blow imagination and the new emotion of a living heart, and the thing is done. But so passionate are the actors of the old Gaelic theme in Miss Fiona Macleod's pages — Scathach the Sad Queen, and Connla the Harper — that it seems possible to urge too much flame under the ribs of death. Like Heine, like Hugo at his best, their imaginer and new creator is in her historical recall only an historian of the heart. Do not be misled by her archaic colours, and her splendid fantasy of an

heroic Queen of the Isles; of a harper with a demon in his harp, like Cravetheen, or of a Skald like Ulric, into thinking you have there the real presence of a barbaric prime. That life, that presence, are never to be recaptured. An adumbration of their going and coming, the shadow of a shadow, may be thrown upon one's canvas and painted there; but the picture must be warmed again with a different colour, the umber have a modern crimson added, if it is to reach your current vision. And this Miss Fiona Macleod has done.

Here is the portrait in full phantasy of Scathach, an Amazon of the Hebrides in the barbaric days. And first her face: "Pale as wax, and of a strange and terrible beauty. They could not look long in her eyes, which were black as darkness, with a red flame wandering in it. Her lips were curled delicately, and were like thin sudden lines of blood in the still whiteness of her face." And for her form: "She was tall, and of great strength, taller than Connla, stronger than Ulric. Long black hair fell upon her shoulders, which, with her breast and thighs, were covered with pale bronze. A red and

green cloak was over the right shoulder, and was held by a great brooch of gold. A yellow torque of gold was round her neck. A three-pointed torque of gold was on her head. Her legs were swathed with deerskin thongs and her feet were in coverings of cowskins stained red."

There is all the particularity of the old romancer in this latter description — the romancer who has his eye on the colour and the romantic circumstance. But in the "strange and terrible beauty" one detected a tell-tale generic touch. And now listen: —

"You die to-night," she says to Connla and Ulric, her captives. Later they appeal to her, through one of her women, in vain.

"It is because she loved Cuchullin," the woman said; "and he was a poet, and sang songs, and made music as you do; . . . and you have put memories into the mind of Scathach. But she will listen to you harping and singing before you die."

In all this intense conception of the Sad Queen, confronting her own tragedy with that of another, seeking solace for her inconsolable heart, one cannot help feeling that the true emotion is a modern one, not only allied to

the revolt of woman against the tyranny of fate and time, and the order devised by man, but felt by the writer herself so profoundly, so passionately, that in Scathach she is compelled to work out her own problem, only giving it in the end, as poets do, an allegorical solution.

Scathach slays Connla because she loves Cuchullin, and Connla is but Cuchullin in another taking, to whom death is as nothing, since love is everything and its loss is death and its gain life.

"Take Connla the Harper," she says, "because he has known all things, knowing that little infinite thing, and has no more to know, and is beyond us, and lay him upon the sands with his face to the stars, and put red brands upon his naked breast, till his heart bursts and he dies."

With that the emotion called up by the fable is suddenly eased and satisfied; for Connla — not for Scathach, who will never be satisfied. Scathach, indeed, recalls the lines from Miss Macleod's extraordinary poetic cycle of the passion and sorrow of women, in which we are told of the fate of those who are doomed —

"To see the fairness of the body passing,
To see the beauty wither, the sweet colour
Fade, the coming of the wintry lines
Upon pale faces chilled with idle longing,
The slow subsidence of the tides of living.
To feel all this, and know the desolate sorrow,
Of the pale place of all defeated dreams,
And to cry out with aching lips, and vainly,
And to cry out with aching heart, and vainly,
And to cry out with aching brain, and vainly,
And to cry out with aching soul, and vainly,
To cry, cry, cry, with passionate heartbreak, sobbing
To the dim wondrous shape of Love Retreating."

In Scathach, we have but this voice, given a different inflection of barbaric pride. But if she were all barbaric she would not move us as she does. Such as she is, she lets us see the working of the favourite fable in Miss Macleod's fantasy, whose conception is always at bottom the same; two people, man and woman, Alasdair and Lora, Alan and Sorcha, Ula and Ulad, Scatchach and Cuchullin — in the one predicament: striving and crying to deliver their love from obstacles of Nature and time, and seeing in their fellow mortals and the elements alike but the demons and angels that can destroy or save. In this way the people become passions,

the elements become personified: the seals become men: the ninth wave becomes a demon: the trees imprison the spirits of lost creatures. Auguries and omens hang on every cloud. The sand is the piteous dust of dead beauties; the ocean is the blood of slain princes.

As with her archaic Gael, so with her Gaels of to-day. With some vivid exceptions, they are personifications rather than actual persons. Take the extraordinary story, one of the Achanna series, *The Dan-nan-Ron.* Its heroine is a girl of Eilanmore — Anne Gillepsie. Her lover, Manus MacCodrum, comes of a small clan in North Uist — dark skinned, brown, among a race of fair islanders, and known as the Sliochd nan Ron — the Clan of the Seals. Anne lives with the Achannas, her three cousins, and one of them bearing the name (which it costs one a shiver to accept) of Gloom, plays on the *feadan,* a primitive flute, the strange tune of the Dan-nan-Ron, the Song of the Seal; which becomes a kind of *leit-motiv* in the tale. The three Achannas bitterly resent Anne's going from their house; and here is tragedy's excuse. They protest, but it is of no avail.

And though Marcus Achanna meets his doom at her lover's hands within an hour, and Gloom Achanna attempts to revenge with the aid of his sinister *feadan,* she sails away that night, knowing nothing of the murder, and is married to Manus. But evil fate follows them — a fate of which Gloom Achanna with his pipe is the personification. Within the year she dies in childbed; and a melancholy akin to madness descends on Manus MacCodrum. Then the *feadan* of Gloom Achanna begins to haunt him again with the Dan-nan-Ron; and under its spell, he is drawn to the sea and to the Great Reef of the Seals. The last scene is extraordinary. Like one possessed — laughing, screaming, gesticulating — he is seen running towards the rocks and the reef, where, with clenched fists, naked, mad, dehumanised, he advances on a bull-seal, who pins him to the rock. The other seals join in with fury and all but tear him to pieces; and when at last his torn body is dragged from the reef and disappears in the sea, it is amid a crowd of leaping, struggling seals, " their fangs red with human gore." Last touch of all, Gloom Achanna is seen turning away from the reef, his revenge

accomplished, playing on his *feadan* as he leaves the sea.

In this pale transcript from a bold original, much is overlooked and much tempered, There is a barbaric note in the account of Manus's death not often found in literature. The word "gore" in the phrase quoted is indicative. We are spared no red stroke of the butcher in the transcendent fantasy of the romancer. It would be hard to find any recent literary creation where imaginative beauty and sheer physical sensation are so mingled.

Gloom Achanna comes and goes continuously in Miss Macleod's pages, and in all he is the dramatic shadow of that evil destiny, which lies in wait in the Hebrides as it does everywhere else. He is the Satan, the Mephistopheles of this sea-play, whose *rôle* it is to wile the virtue and life-principle out of others. He uses his magic pipe and its fatal tunes as if he had misread Cornelius Agrippa, when that subtle master wrote: "Birds are allured with Pipes. Music hath caused friendship between men and Dolphins. The sound of the harp doth lead up and down the Hypoborean Swans."

Another personification that might be set beside this Gaelic Mephistopheles, and one freer from sensation and hot colours, is that of the wild child-spirit, Oona, in *The Mountain Lovers.* As Gloom Achanna pipes, so she dances and sings, and at her music the mountain and forest of Ben Iolair sigh in satisfaction and lend their ears; and Nial, the dwarf, the soulless man, begins to long for a soul:

> "Wild fawn, wild fawn
> Hast seen the Green Lady?
> The merles are singing,
> The ferns are springing,
> The little leaves whisper from dusk to dawn—
> 'Green Lady, Green Lady!'
> The little leaves whisper from dusk to dawn—
> 'Wild fawn, wild fawn!'"

The Mountain Lovers is another romance of that ecstasy of nature which in Miss Fiona Macleod's writings supplies the intervals which other tale-writers might fill with conversation and commoner reports of men. To take it up after some carpet comedy, or cloak-and-rapier romance, or after the hearty humours and realities of the other Scotland of Mr. Barrie or "Ian Maclaren," is to be

startled by the mixed passion and innocence of its pages. Dawn, sunrise, moonrise, the wind, the storm: these are its events. Sunset opens the book with a scene in which the dancing child Oona is but the incarnation of the forest life and its changing hours:

"She was like the spirit of woodland loneliness: a lovely thing of fantasy that might recreate its beauty the next moment in a medley of sunrays, or as a floating golden light about the green boles, or as a wind-flower swaying among the tree-roots with its own exquisite vibration of life. So elemental was she, then and there, that if she herself had passed into the rhythm of her rapt dance, and so merged into the cadence of the wind among leaves and branches, or into the remoter murmuring of the mountain burns and of the white cataracts, nothing of it would have seemed unnatural. She was as absolutely one with nature as though she were a dancing sunbeam, or the brief embodiment of the joy of the wind. . . .

"As the child danced, a human mote in that vast area of sun-splashed woodland, the light flooded in upon her scanty and ragged dress of brown homespun, from which her arms and legs emerged as the white chestnut-buds from their sheafs of amber. Her skin was of the hue and smoothness of crudded cream, where not sunburnt to the brown of the wallflower. Dark as were her heavily-lashed eyes, her hair—a mass of short curls, creeping and twisting and leaping throughout a wild and tangled waviness—was of a wonderful white-like yellow, as of the sheen of wheat on a windy August noon,

or the strange amber-gold of the harvest-moon when rising through a sigh of mist. . . . To and fro, flickeringly as a leaf-shadow, the small body tripped and leapt. Sometimes she raised her arms when, with tossed-back head, she sprang to one side or forward; sometimes she clapped her hands, and a smile for a moment dreamed—rather than lay—upon her face. But none seeing her could have thought she danced out of mere glee. . . . Either the child was going through this fantastic by-play for some ulterior reason, or she was wrought by an ecstasy that could be expressed only in this way. Perhaps no one who had met a glance of those wild-wood eyes could have doubted that she was rapt by an unconscious fantasy of rhythm."

It requires some courage to write like that in the day of the document novel and M. Zola; and it would be difficult to justify to any halting critic the "ulterior reason" suddenly recalled to overweight the conclusion of this exquisite scene. Purely idyllic here, later in the story the child Oona takes part in a dramatic idyl, which is one of the most imaginative things in all the range of Miss Macleod's romance, but which is no more likely to conciliate the unbeliever. It is where the blind man Torcall, overtaken by drowsiness, is led by Oona through the forest to the side of the sleeping woman Anabal, whom he had once loved, and learnt bitterly

to hate. There, as he too sinks to sleep, Oona joins the hands of the two sleepers, and the woman thinks it the hand of her dead husband. But the scene must be read, to be felt. A Greek dramatist might have conceived it; only a neo-Celtic romancer could have written it. Its conclusion is as sensational and as remorseless as anything in Hugo. In all this, however, it is the passions and emotions that seem most to live, and seize like dæmonic things on men and women; the men and women are but the instruments and symbols of fate, love and hate, spent desire, unavailing sorrow, and tragic death. But death is not the end. Death is but an episode in the region of Ula and Ulad.

In succeeding stories, if the method, as was said, became more real, more humanly devised, the allegorist and the fabulist was still there. It was in *The Dominion of Dreams* that the two tendencies at last took an unmistakable form, and were definitely set in order, and put into a kind of artistic apposition by the writer's own conscious device. In one section was stories, "By the Yellow Moonrock" and "Children of the

Dark Star," for example, where Hebridean earth still dusted the stage, and where Gloom Achanna was tied to reality by an unreal man of letters. In the next section, the Dreamer and Mystic ruled absolute, and led one on in the steps of a visionary like Ivor M'Iain, to the "low line where the moors crept into the sky," and so to the haunted region of the Wells of Peace and Ulad the Lonely.

> "There is a land of Dream,
> I have trodden its golden ways,
> I have seen its amber light. . . ."

But there is an Isle of Emain beyond the sea, and there is a "Distant Country of Splendour and Terror" beyond even the region of dreams; the country of which we read in one of these piteous episodes of Love's "untold story." Here is a fragment of it, broken off to show how (as if in a difficult recall of things too bitter for remembrance) the teller of the story has conceived the picture of the two lovers, fateful "bodily images of a flame that was not mortal, and of desires that were not finite." It is the most intimate chapter in all this book of the heart: —

"Year by year their love deepened. I know of no love like theirs; it was, in truth, a flame. . . . How could she tell what she was to him? He could not tell her what words fail to tell. But she knew her own heart; she heard it in those silences where women listen. . . . They turned the same way, not knowing it. How could they know, being blind? Blind children they were. He feared the flame would consume them. She feared it would consume itself. Therein lay the bitterness. But for her, being a woman, the depths were deeper. He had his dreams. . . . When, at last, the end came—a strange, a tragic, an almost incredible end, perhaps, for love did not veer, and passion was not slain, but translated to a starry dream, and every sweet and lovely intercourse was theirs still—the suffering was too great to be borne. . . . She loved to the edge of death by will. Will can control the mortal things of love. She put her frail strength into the balance, then her memories, then her dreams. At the last she had already put all in the balance, all but her soul. That, too, she had now put there. . . . They lived long after this great change; but that came to her no more which had gone. For him, he grew slowly to understand a love more great than his. His had not known the innermost flame—that is pure fire."

The spectator of this extraordinary soul's tragedy loses much by having it reduced to its elements. It is a mystery, of which some inkling is given in those subtle lines of a metaphysical poem that used to be attributed to Shakespeare: —

> "So they lov'd, as love in twain
> Had the essence but in one:
> Two distincts, division none:
> Number there in love was slain."

But Love's Martyr, in this different way of love, and as a result of the breaking by one of its two actors of some occult, but imperious spiritual law — brings us this mysterious sequel — that while for her, who was most the Martyr, there was a Death-in-life, for him there was a new deliverance of the second self which has soul, will, and imagination apart from the ordinary self of body, mind, and sense.

Having brought us thus far on the road, it is easy for the fashioner of these things to carry us on to the top and crest of her mount of vision. It is but a step in fact from the "Distant Country" to the "Divine Adventure." The last words of the passage quoted above become the refrain of the extended parable also, which leaves the mystery of love — love, that is, between man and woman — and turns to the mystery of life and death. It is written with a solemn tenderness, an eloquence of the heart, such as could only come to a writer who had

known the burden of the heart's desire and bitter loss, and the rest. There is little or nothing in it of the early manner of the writer. The old glut of images has been eased; the early excess of fantasy, that fury of the pen, which hurled words like stones at every image, everything described, that too urgent originality, have given way to the reticence and the calm of other planes of thought.

It is to *The Divine Adventure,* then, as was suggested at the opening of these pages, that one has to turn for the fruition of the Gaelic tree of mystery, which was first set in *Pharais.* It is the grave dispassionate sequel to those legends of love's passion and fury, and consolation in the natural world. It would never have been written, had they not been written first; had they not been filled in particular with the emotion, which has been pointed out in them, of the woman's love, and life-in-death, and restless seeking for symbols to express herself, her earthly sorrows, her spiritual aspiration. Its accent is like little in the familiar voice of literature, though once and again it might recall to Cymric ears that of an old mystic, Morgan

Llwyd, where he says, discoursing of Paradise with the voice of Lazarus: "My natural life was put out like a candle or as if one did fall asleep into sensible visions of the night. I found myself full of thoughts, but very quiet, having no lust, or will, or motion of my own."

But poor Morgan Llwyd, a poet born out of time to a harsh birthright, set the edge of his imagination against the beauty of the visible and revealed world. It is a truer mysticism which holds with the writer of *The Divine Adventure* that the soul has to learn to become "one with the wind and the grass and with all that lives and moves; to take its life from the root of the body, and its green life from the mind, and its flower and fragrance from what it may of itself obtain, not only from this world, but from its own dews, its own rainbows, dawn stars and evening stars." In this way the Body becomes the friend, and not as with the ascetics, the clog and foul garment, of the Soul.

The old mysticism, Catholic or Puritan, was often shadowed by the old asceticism; and the last word of the old asceticism went to the decrying and misconceiving of the beauty and wonder of the Woman, a word

whose echo we have heard, indeed, in the corridors of a different philosophy as lately as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The new mysticism, as it lurks in these fables and parables of a neo-Celtic dreamer, is more human. It is filled and quickened to life by the imagination of Woman's earthly and Spiritual Beauty, her Divine and natural Mystery — whether it be a St. Bride of the Isles, or a Sorcha dying in the bitterest way of Motherhood. It is in a more tender sense of Nature, as seen through the eyes of a Woman's longing, and in the vision of Motherhood, that it gains its emotion, and finds its spiritual key to the interpretation of the revealed world. Whether it is to serve as the vision of the older mystics has served — whether it, in its turn, is to gain or to suffer from its attempt to expand the natural imagery into the supernatural — it is yet far too early to say. In the writings of Miss Fiona Macleod, if it has urged at times a too strenuous impulse toward figurative thought, it has tended both to vivify to marvellous new life, and to distort a little, at last, the beautiful mythology of the ancient Gaelic world; and this alike in the romantic memory

and in the spiritual recall of its heroes and saints, and its fateful, beautiful women.

But this is to do an injustice, in the end, to a rare imagination, whose working it is more easy to wonder at than altogether to understand. It is well to remember that the writer of *Pharais* and *The Mountain Lovers, The Laughter of Peterkin,* and the *Barbaric Tales,* and the writer of many of the rhymes and so-called runes which fill the pages of *From the Hills of Dream,* would count as a poet and tale-writer of great originality if there were no other claim to make. Lately too, the Stage Society made an interesting attempt, without, perhaps, quite understanding all the difficulties of it, to put on the stage of the Globe Theatre Miss Macleod's play and refrain of the *House of Usna;* which suggests again that her aims are not to end only in allegory and in subtle Essays of the Soul. But Love and Death, Destiny and the Fear of Death, were the burden too of this stage-fantasy of Concobar and the loss of Deirdre the Beautiful. Great emotions were its men; passions and cries on the wind were its women. And when Duach spoke to Concobar, "O King, there is no evil done

upon the world that the wind does not bring back to the feet of him who made it," the hearer could not fail to hear in it the accent, full of fate and disaster, that he had heard in *Darthool and the Sons of Usna,* and to feel that the search for a dramatic form was not likely to alter much the imagination of the writer.

And as for attempting to penetrate the other mystery, which seems at intervals to have troubled the polite detectives of literature, the secret of the writer's personality, that would be as out of place here, as it is, after all, unnecessary. Enough if we know that these dreams and fables of Iona and the western isles were not concocted in Kensington, but are authentic in the sense that they have the salt airs that the Achannas tasted genuinely blowing through their keen pages.

"I have no liking," wrote their author in a letter once, "for personal publicity. My writings are for the unknown public, not myself. . . . My life is mainly spent in the Western Highlands and Isles, and save for a week or so now and again in Edinburgh, I am never in towns which depress me beyond words, and which I care for only for the music that I can hear there. For the rest, I was

born more than a thousand years ago, in the remote region of Gaeldom known as the Hills of Dream. There I have lived the better part of my life; my father's name was Romance, and that of my mother was Dream."

How the isles of this heritor of the old Gaelic spirit have furnished her region in art, we have seen. It would be harder to discover the process by which that region, undergoing a sea change, became like the other Pharais in the vision of St. Martin, where he "saw flowers that sounded," and "heard notes that shone." One ends, as one began, in paying tribute to the charm and natural magic, the beauty, the genius indeed, of her writings, and in trying to point to what may come to be accepted as their last errand and effect. This done, their account may best make its pause at this strange passage in the essay on "Iona," which it is hardly fair to take from its context, but which appears to be the natural ending, figuratively presented, of the essayist's quest of those things, importunate and profound, whose symbol in older romance was the High Mystery of the Holy Grail: —

"It is commonly said that, if he would be heard, none should write in advance of his times. That,

I do not believe. Only, it does not matter how few listen. I believe that we are close upon a great and deep spiritual change; I believe a new redemption is even now conceived of the Divine Spirit in the human heart, that is itself as a woman, broken in dreams and yet sustained in faith, patient long-suffering, looking towards home. I believe that though the Reign of Peace may be yet a long way off, it is drawing near; and that Who shall save us anew shall come divinely as a Woman . . . but whether through mortal birth, or as an immortal breathing upon our souls, none can yet know.

"Sometimes I dream of the old prophecy that Christ shall come again upon Iona; and of that later prophecy which foretells, now as the Bride of Christ, now as the Daughter of God, now as the Divine Spirit embodied through mortal birth in a Man—the coming of a new Presence and Power; and dream that this may be upon Iona, so that the little Gaelic island may become as the little Syrian Bethlehem. But more wise it is to dream, *not of hallowed ground, but of the hallowed gardens of the soul,* wherein She shall appear white and radiant. Or that, upon the hills, where we are wandered, the Shepherdess shall call us home."

The Bibelot

THE Ballads and Poems *of Thackeray as he tells us in his preface to the first edition, (issued simultaneously in England and America,) dated Boston, October 27, 1855, "were written during the past fifteen years, and are now gathered by the author from his own books and the various periodicals in which the pieces appeared originally." In 1869 this collection was enlarged by the inclusion of both earlier and later work which then assumed a definitive form, and has since received no further additions.*

That the fame of the novelist has in a measure tended to limit our appreciation of his verse is doubtless true, but is not a fact to beget captious criticism. Compared with Thackeray's life-work the occasional poetry thrown off in hours of relaxation does not bulk large; a scant two hundred pages, measured against a score of volumes that in the main have become part and parcel of English literature.

And yet within these narrow bounds what "infinite riches" do we not find! What wit, what undying pathos! In language

as easily grasped by the child as by the grown-up man, one of the lords of laughter and of tears speaks and we grow young, and are light-hearted: we listen and love him. In our limited space it is impossible to adequately blend these two currents which ran side by side: the stream that has the deeper source of inspiration must be mainly drawn upon for the time being. Later we shall prove that a humorous Bibelot *is not, as we have been informed, out of our power to produce*

Meanwhile we may profitably read some of the tenderest lyrics in the language. Mrs. Ritchie has told us that The Cane Bottom'd Chair *was her father's favorite ballad, and who will doubt it? In 1876 Edward FitzGerald adapted three stanzas of* The Age of Wisdom, (*the first, second, and the sixth,*) *"to an old Cambridge Tune, which he and I have sung together."* The Ballad of Bouillebaisse *is charged with the reminiscent touch of all lost youth and its far-off* La Vie de Bohême. *As for* The Pen and the Album, *the* Vanitas Vanitatum *verses and* The End of the Play, *do they not utterly disprove the existence of "a withered world of Thackerayan satire," — that smart saying which sounds like sense but is in fact simple nonsense?*

As Mr. Andrew Lang puts it: "Whenever you speak for yourself, and speak in earnest, how magical, how rare, how lonely in our literature is the beauty of your sentences!" That is true criticism and is equally applicable to Thackeray's poetry. For it is verse of an incommunicable clarity and sweetness which To-day as well as Yesterday remains, and could not otherwise than remain, "For ever echoing in the heart and present in the memory."

Ballads and Lyrics
By
William Makepeace Thackeray

NOTE.

To some of our readers it may prove interesting to know the time and place of the original appearance of our twelve selections:

1. The Ballad of Bouillabaisse, *Punch,* Feb. 17, 1849.
2. At the Church Gate, "Pendennis," (chapter 31,) 1849-50.
3. The Age of Wisdom, "Rebecca and Rowena," (chapter 4,) 1850.
4. The Cane-Bottom'd Chair, *Punch,* March 27, 1847.
5. The Mahogany Tree, *Punch,* Jan. 9, 1847.
6. The Pen and the Album, *Keepsake,* 1853.
7. Piscator and Piscatrix, "Miscellanies," Vol. I, 1855.
8. Vanitas Vanitatum, *Cornhill Magazine,* July, 1860.
9. A Credo, "Philip," (chapter 7,) 1861.
10. To a Very Old Woman, "Miscellanies," Vol. I, 1855.
11. Mrs. Katherine's Lantern, *Cornhill Magazine,* Jan., 1867.
12. The End of the Play, "Dr. Birch and His Young Friends," 1849.

THE BALLAD OF BOUILLABAISSE.

A STREET there is in Paris famous,
For which no rhyme our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is —
The New Street of the Little Fields.
And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended,
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is —
A sort of soup or broth, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
That Greenwich never could outdo:
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace:
All these you eat at TERRÉ'S tavern
In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed a rich and savoury stew 'tis;
And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
Should love good victuals and good drinks.
And Cordelier or Benedictine
Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting,
Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is?
  Yes, here the lamp is, as before;
The smiling red-cheeked *écaillère* is
  Still opening oysters at the door.
Is TERRÉ still alive and able?
  I recollect his droll grimace:
He'd come and smile before your table,
  And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter — nothing's changed or older.
  "How's Monsieur TERRÉ, waiter, pray?"
The waiter stares, and shrugs his shoulder —
  "Monsieur is dead this many a day."
"It is the lot of saint and sinner,
  So honest TERRÉ's run his race."
"What will Monsieur require for dinner?"
  "Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse?"

"Oh, oui, Monsieur," 's the waiter's answer;
  "Quel vin Monsieur desire-t-il?"
"Tell me a good one." — "That I can, Sir:
  The Chambertin with yellow seal."
"So TERRÉ's gone," I say, and sink in
  My old accustom'd corner-place;
"He's done with feasting and with drinking,
  With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse."

My old accustom'd corner here is,
  The table still is in the nook;

Ah! vanished many a busy year is
  This well-known chair since last I took,
When first I saw ye, *cari luoghi,*
  I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
And now a grizzled, grim old fogy,
  I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty
  Of early days here met to dine?
Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty —
  I'll pledge them in the good old wine.
The kind old voices and old faces
  My memory can quick retrace;
Around the board they take their places,
  And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There's JACK has made a wondrous marriage;
  There's laughing TOM is laughing yet;
There's brave AUGUSTUS drives his carriage;
  There's poor old FRED in the *Gazette;*
On JAMES'S head the grass is growing:
  Good Lord! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the claret flowing,
  And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
  I mind me of a time that's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
  In this same place — but not alone.

A fair young form was nestled near me,
  A dear dear face looked fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me
  — There's no one now to share my cup.

. . . . . .

I drink it — the Fates ordain it.
  Come, fill it, and have done with rhymes:
Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
  In memory of dear old times.
Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;
  And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.
  — Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse!

AT THE CHURCH GATE.

ALTHOUGH I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
Ofttimes I hover;
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
Expectant of her.

The Minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout,
And noise and humming:
They've hush'd the Minster bell:
The organ 'gins to swell:
She's coming, she's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid, and stepping fast,
And hastening hither,
With modest eyes downcast:
She comes — she's here — she's past —
May Heaven go with her!

Kneel, undisturbed, fair Saint!
Pour out your praise or plaint
Meekly and duly;
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
    Lingering a minute
Like outcast spirits who wait
And see through heaven's gate
    Angels within it.

THE AGE OF WISDOM.

Ho, pretty page, with the dimpled chin,
That never has known the barber's shear,
All your wish is woman to win,
This is the way that boys begin,—
Wait till you come to Forty Year.

Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;
Sighing and singing of midnight strains,
Under Bonnybell's window panes,—
Wait till you come to Forty Year.

Forty times over let Michaelmas pass,
Grizzling hair the brain doth clear—
Then you know a boy is an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
Once you have come to Forty Year,

Pledge me round, I bid ye declare,
All good fellows whose beards are grey,
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome ere
Ever a month was passed away?

The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
The brightest eyes that ever have shone,

May pray and whisper, and we not list,
Or look away, and never be missed,
  Ere yet ever a month is gone.

Gillian's dead, God rest her bier,
  How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian's married, but I sit here
Alone and merry at Forty Year,
  Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.

THE CANE-BOTTOM'D CHAIR.

In tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
And a ragged old jacket perfumed with cigars,
Away from the world and its toils and its cares,
I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs.

To mount to this realm is a toil, to be sure,
But the fire there is bright and the air rather pure;
And the view I behold on a sunshiny day
Is grand through the chimney-pots over the way.

This snug little chamber is cramm'd in all nooks
With worthless old nicknacks and silly old books,
And foolish old odds and foolish old ends,
Crack'd bargains from brokers, cheap keepsakes from friends.

Old armour, prints, pictures, pipes, china (all crack'd),
Old rickety tables, and chairs broken-backed;
A twopenny treasury, wondrous to see;
What matter? 'tis pleasant to you, friend, and me.

No better divan need the Sultan require,
Than the creaking old sofa that basks by the fire;
And 'tis wonderful, surely, what music you get
From the rickety, ramshackle, wheezy spinet.

That praying-rug came from a Turcoman's camp;
By Tiber once twinkled that brazen old lamp;

A Mameluke fierce yonder dagger has drawn:
'Tis a murderous knife to toast muffins upon.

Long long through the hours, and the night, and the chimes,
Here we talk of old books and old friends, and old times;
As we sit in a fog made of rich Latakie
This chamber is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
There's one that I love and I cherish the best:
For the finest of couches that's padded with hair
I never would change thee, my cane-bottom'd chair.

'Tis a bandy-legg'd, high-shoulder'd, worm-eaten seat,
With a creaking old back, and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when Fanny sat there,
I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottom'd chair.

If chairs have but feeling, in holding such charms,
A thrill must have pass'd through your wither'd old arms!
I look'd, and I long'd, and I wish'd in despair;
I wish'd myself turn'd to a cane-bottom'd chair.

It was but a moment she sat in this place,
She'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
And she sat there, and bloom'd in my cane-bottom'd chair.

And so I have valued my chair ever since,
Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince;

Saint Fanny, my patroness sweet I declare,
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottom'd chair.

When the candles burn low, and the company's gone,
In the silence of night as I sit here alone —
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair —
My Fanny I see in my cane-bottom'd chair.

She comes from the past and revisits my room;
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;
So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottom'd chair.

THE MAHOGANY TREE.

CHRISTMAS is here:
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we:
Little we fear
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The Mahogany Tree.

Once on the boughs
Birds of rare plume
Sang, in its bloom;
Night-birds are we:
Here we carouse,
Singing like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short —
When we are gone,
Let them sing on
Round the old tree.

For I'm a Jolly Good Fellow

From the painting by W. Denny Sadler

This trial is never so happy in his choice of subjects as in painting a group of boon companions such as were wont to gather round "the merling tree," at the Yew-tree in Old England. Mr. Sadler's verses under this title might have been inspired by the picture, and as the picture may have emanated from the convivial verses.

The Tabor-Gray Art Co.

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Round the old tree.

The Tabor-Prang Art Co.

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust!
We sing round the tree.

Care, like a dun,
Lurks at the gate:
Let the dog wait;
Happy we'll be!
Drink, every one;
Pile up the coals,
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree!

Drain we the cup.—
Friend, art afraid?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up;
Empty it yet;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree.

Sorrows, begone!
Life and its ills,

Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.
Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite,
Leave us to-night,
Round the old tree.

THE PEN AND THE ALBUM.

"I AM Miss Catherine's book," the Album speaks;
"I've lain among your tomes these many weeks;
I'm tired of their old coats and yellow cheeks.

"Quick, Pen! and write a line with a good grace:
Come! draw me off a funny little face;
And, prithee, send me back to Chesham Place."

PEN.

"I am my master's faithful old Gold Pen;
I've served him three long years, and drawn since then
Thousands of funny women and droll men.

"O Album! could I tell you all his ways
And thoughts, since I am his, these thousand days,
Lord, how your pretty pages I'd amaze!"

ALBUM.

"His ways? his thoughts? Just whisper me a few;
Tell me a curious anecdote or two,
And write 'em quickly off, good Mordan, do!"

PEN.

"Since he my faithful service did engage
To follow him through his queer pilgrimage,
I've drawn and written many a line and page.

"Caricatures I scribbled have, and rhymes,
And dinner-cards, and picture pantomines,
And merry little children's books at times.

"I've writ the foolish fancy of his brain;
The aimless jest that, striking, hath caused pain;
The idle word that he'd wish back again.

. . . . . .

"I've help'd him to pen many a line for bread;
To joke, with sorrow aching in his head;
And make your laughter when his own heart bled.

"I've spoke with men of all degree and sort —
Peers of the land, and ladies of the Court;
Oh, but I've chronicled a deal of sport!

"Feasts that were ate a thousand days ago,
Biddings to wine that long hath ceased to flow,
Gay meetings with good fellows long laid low;

"Summons to bridal, banquet, burial, ball,
Tradesmen's polite reminders of his small
Account due Christmas last — I've answered all.

"Poor Diddler's tenth petition for a half-
Guinea; Miss Bunyan's for an autograph;
So I refuse, accept, lament, or laugh,

"Condole, congratulate, invite, praise, scoff,
Day after day still dipping in my trough,
And scribbling pages after pages off.

"Day after day the labour's to be done,
And sure as come the postman and the sun,
The indefatigable ink must run.

. . . . . .

"Go back, my pretty little gilded tome,
To a fair mistress and a pleasant home,
Where soft hearts greet us whenso'er we come!

"Dear friendly eyes, with constant kindness lit,
However rude my verse, or poor my wit,
Or sad or gay my mood, you welcome it.

"Kind lady! till my last of lines is penn'd,
My master's love, grief, laughter, at an end,
Whene'er I write your name, may I write friend!

"Not all are so that were so in past years;
Voices, familiar once, no more he hears;
Names, often writ, are blotted out in tears.

"So be it: — joys will end and tears will dry —
Album! my master bids me wish good-bye,
He'll send you to your mistress presently.

"And thus with thankful heart he closes you:
Blessing the happy hour when a friend he knew
So gentle and so generous, and so true.

"Nor pass the words as idle phrases by;
Stranger! I never writ a flattery,
Nor sign'd the page that register'd a lie."

PISCATOR AND PISCATRIX.

LINES WRITTEN TO AN ALBUM PRINT.

As on this pictured page I look,
This pretty tale of line and hook
As though it were a novel-book
Amuses and engages:
I know them both, the boy and girl;
She is the daughter of the Earl,
The lad (that has his hair in curl)
My Lord the County's page is.

A pleasant place for such a pair!
The fields lie basking in the glare;
No breath of wind the heavy air
Of lazy summer quickens.
Hard by you see the castle tall;
The village nestles round the wall,
As round about the hen its small
Young progeny of chickens.

It is too hot to pace the keep;
To climb the turret is too steep;
My Lord the Earl is dozing deep,
His noonday dinner over:

The postern-warder is asleep
(Perhaps they've bribed him not to peep):
And so from out the gate they creep,
And cross the fields of clover.

Their lines into the brook they launch;
He lays his cloak upon a branch,
To guarantee his Lady Blanche
's delicate complexion:
He takes his rapier from his haunch,
That beardless doughty champion staunch;
He'd drill it through the rival's paunch
That question'd his affection!

O heedless pair of sportsmen slack!
You never mark, though trout or jack,
Or little foolish stickleback,
Your baited snares may capture.
What care has *she* for line and hook?
She turns her back upon the brook,
Upon her lover's eyes to look
In sentimental rapture.

O loving pair! as thus I gaze
Upon the girl who smiles always,
The little hand that ever plays
Upon the lover's shoulder;

In looking at your pretty shapes,
A sort of envious wish escapes
(Such as the Fox had for the Grapes)
The Poet your beholder.

To be brave, handsome, twenty-two;
With nothing else on earth to do,
But all day long to bill and coo:
It were a pleasant calling.
And had I such a partner sweet;
A tender heart for mine to beat,
A gentle hand my clasp to meet; —
I'd let the world flow at my feet,
And never heed its brawling.

VANITAS VANITATUM.

How spake of old the Royal Seer?
(His text is one I love to treat on.)
This life of ours, he said, is sheer
Mataiotes Mataioteton.

O Student of this gilded Book,
Declare, while musing on its pages,
If truer words were ever spoke
By ancient or by modern sages?

The various authors' names but note,[1]
French, Spanish, English, Russians, Germans:
And in the volume polyglot,
Sure you may read a hundred sermons!

What histories of life are here,
More wild than all romancers' stories;
What wondrous transformations queer,
What homilies on human glories!

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[1] Between a page by Jules Janin, and a poem by the Turkish Ambassador, in Madame de R——'s album, containing the autographs of kings, princes, poets, marshals, musicians, diplomatists, statesmen, artists, and men of letters of all nations.

What theme for sorrow or for scorn!
  What chronicle of Fate's surprises—
Of adverse fortune nobly borne,
  Of chances, changes, ruins, rises!

Of thrones upset and sceptres broke,
  How strange a record here is written!
Of honours, dealt as if in joke;
  Of brave desert unkindly smitten.

How low men were, and how they rise!
  How high they were, and how they tumble!
O vanity of vanities!
  O laughable, pathetic jumble!

Here between honest Janin's joke
  And his Turk Excellency's firman,
I write my name upon the book:
  I write my name—and end my sermon.

O Vanity of vanities!
  How wayward the decrees of Fate are;
How very weak the very wise,
  How very small the very great are!

What mean these stale moralities,
  Sir Preacher, from your desk you mumble?
Why rail against the great and wise,
  And tire us with your ceaseless grumble?

Pray choose us out another text,
  O man morose and narrow-minded!
Come turn the page — I read the next,
  And then the next, and still I find it.

Read here how Wealth aside was thrust,
  And Folly set in place exalted;
How Princes footed in the dust,
  While lacqueys in the saddle vaulted.

Though thrice a thousand years are past
  Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
The weary King Ecclesiast,
  Upon his awful tablets penned it, —

Methinks the text is never stale,
  And life is every day renewing
Fresh comments on the old old tale
  Of Folly, Fortune, Glory, Ruin.

Hark to the Preacher, preaching still
  He lifts his voice and cries his sermon,
Here at St. Peter's on Cornhill,
  As yonder on the Mount of Hermon:

For you and me to heart to take
  (O dear beloved brother readers)
To-day as when the good King spake
  Beneath the solemn Syrian cedars.

A CREDO.

I.

For the sole edification
Of this decent congregation,
Goodly people, by your grant
I will sing a holy chant —
I will sing a holy chant.
If the ditty sound but oddly,
'Twas a father, wise and godly,
Sang it so long ago —
Then sing as Martin Luther sang,
As Doctor Martin Luther sang:
"Who loves not wine, woman, and song,
He is a fool his whole life long!"

II.

He, by custom patriarchal,
Loved to see the beaker sparkle;
And he thought the wine improved,
Tasted by the lips he loved —
By the kindly lips he loved.
Friends, I wish this custom pious
Duly were observed by us,
To combine love, song, wine,

And sing as Martin Luther sang,
As Doctor Martin Luther sang:
"Who loves not wine, woman, and song,
He is a fool his whole life long!"

III.

Who refuses this our Credo,
And who will not sing as we do,
Were he holy as John Knox,
I'd pronounce him heterodox!
    I'd pronounce him heterodox,
And from out this congregation,
With a solemn commination,
    Banish quick the heretic,
Who will not sing as Luther sang,
As Doctor Martin Luther sang;
"Who loves not wine, woman, and song,
He is a fool his whole life long!"

TO A VERY OLD WOMAN.

LA MOTTE FOUQUÉ.

"Und Du gingst einst, die Myrt' in Haare."

And thou wert once a maiden fair,
A blushing virgin warm and young:
With myrtles wreathed in golden hair,
And glossy brow that knew no care —
Upon a bridegroom's arm you hung.

The golden locks are silvered now,
The blushing cheek is pale and wan;
The spring may bloom, the autumn glow,
All's one — in chimney corner thou
Sitt'st shivering on. —

A moment — and thou sink'st to rest!
To wake perhaps an angel blest
In the bright presence of thy Lord.
Oh, weary is life's path to all!
Hard is the strife, and light the fall,
But wondrous the reward!

MRS. KATHERINE'S LANTERN.

WRITTEN IN A LADY'S ALBUM.

"COMING from a gloomy court,
Place of Israelite resort,
This old lamp I've brought with me.
Madam, on its panes you'll see
The initials K. and E."

"An old lantern brought to me?
Ugly, dingy, battered, black!"
(Here a lady I suppose
Turning up a pretty nose) —
"Pray, sir, take the old thing back.
I've no taste for *bric-à-brac.*"

"Please to mark the letters twain" —
(I'm supposed to speak again) —
"Graven on the lantern pane.
Can you tell me who was she,
Mistress of the flowery wreath,
And the anagram beneath —
The mysterious K E?

"Full a hundred years are gone
Since the little beacon shone
From a Venice balcony:

There, on summer nights, it hung,
And her lovers came and sung
To their beautiful K E.

"Hush! in the canal below
Don't you hear the splash of oars
Underneath the lantern's glow,
And a thrilling voice begins
To the sound of mandolins? —
Begins singing of amore
And delire and dolore —
O the ravishing tenore!

"Lady, do you know the tune?
Ah, we all of us have hummed it!
I've an old guitar has thrummed it,
Under many a changing moon.
Shall I try it? *Do* RE MI . . .
What is this? *Ma foi,* the fact is,
That my hand is out of practice,
And my poor old fiddle cracked is,

"And a man — I let the truth out, —
Who's had almost every tooth out,
Cannot sing as once he sung,
When he was young as you are young,
When he was young and lutes were strung,
And love-lamps in the casement hung."

THE END OF THE PLAY.

THE play is done; the curtain drops,
  Slow falling to the prompter's bell:
A moment yet the actor stops,
  And looks around, to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task;
  And, when he's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
  A face that's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends,
  Let's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
  As fits the merry Christmas time.
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
  That Fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good night! with honest gentle hearts
  A kindly greeting go alway!

Good night! — I'd say, the griefs, the joys,
  Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
  Are but repeated in our age.
I'd say, your woes were not less keen,
  Your hopes more vain, than those of men;
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
  At forty-five played o'er again.

I'd say, we suffer and we strive,
  Not less nor more as men than boys;
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
  As erst at twelve in corduroys.
And if, in time of sacred youth,
  We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray Heaven that early Love and Truth
  May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
  I'd say, how fate may change and shift;
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
  The race not always to the swift.
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
  The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
  The kind cast pitilessly down.

Who knows the inscrutable design?
  Blessed be He who took and gave!
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
  Be weeping at her darling's grave? [1]
We bow to Heaven that will'd it so,
  That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
  That's free to give, or to recall.

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1 C.B. ob. 29th November 1848, æt. 42.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit:
  Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
  Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
  To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we'll kneel,
  Confessing Heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
  Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed;
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
  And longing passion unfulfilled.
Amen! whatever fate be sent,
  Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
  And whitened with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
  Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the Awful Will,
  And bear it with an honest heart,
Who misses or who wins the prize.
  Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
  Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young!
  (Bear kindly with my humble lays);

The sacred chorus first was sung
  Upon the first of Christmas days:
The shepherds heard it overhead —
  The joyful angels raised it then:
Glory to heaven on high, it said,
  And peace on earth to gentle men.

My song, save this, is little worth;
  I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
  As fits the solemn Christmastide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth,
  Be this, good friends, our carol still —
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
  To men of gentle will.

THERE ends THE BIBELOT Volume Eight. Edited by Thomas B. Mosher and originally published by him at XLV Exchange Street Portland Maine. MDCCCCII.

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